



**A Tradition of  
Educational Excellence**

# **EDWARDSBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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JAMES A. KNOLL, SUPERINTENDENT

Tuesday, January 29, 2019

## **EDDIE DOMINATES THE MIDWEST!**

This *should* be the headline for the winter storm. The polar vortex that is bearing down on us is a massive area of swirling frigid air pushed down to the Midwest by the jet stream. One definition of an eddy is a circular current. So, the giant rotating weather system is an “EDDIE.”

As of this morning, Governor Whitmer has declared a State of Emergency for the state of Michigan due to the weather conditions.

Taking into consideration the severe cold temperatures, accumulated snowfall, and strong winds, **Edwardsburg Public Schools will be closing the next two days, Wednesday, January 30 and Thursday, January 31.** This includes **all** activities: contests, practices, and meetings. The Board of Education meeting scheduled for this past Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, has been rescheduled to Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The weather has been a challenge the last two weeks for Southwest Michigan. As an organization, EPS met to resolve the issues that were caused by last Tuesday’s “Ice Storm.” We have a plan to communicate better with our parents and community. As we navigate this storm, we will keep you updated.

### **What is the process for closing school due to weather conditions?**

When extreme weather conditions exist, the Superintendent and Transportation Director work together in collaboration with area Superintendents, the Cass County Sheriff’s Department, and the County Road Commission to make the decision to remain open or to close the District and/or cancel activities. We begin to monitor weather conditions in the days preceding predictions of rain, ice, wind, and cold. I am up at 4:00 a.m. checking roads and weather reports from multiple sources so I can gather the most accurate information to make a decision about closing school.

In determining weather related closures, many variables are considered. These may include:

- The amount of snow (and future predicted snowfall)
- Whether snow has been cleared from bus routes
- The condition of the roads (ice, drifting)
- Clarity of pathways for walkers and at bus stops
- Whether snow has been cleared from our bus loops and parking areas
- Temperature including wind chill.

In terms of temperatures, we closely monitor the temperature and wind chill throughout the early morning and just prior to recess or other outdoor activities. Although we do not have a specific temperature for closing school, we do reference the recommendations of the National Weather Service. When wind chill falls to -19 degrees, the point at which frostbite will likely occur if skin is exposed for 30 minutes, we become very concerned. If other conditions are present, such as snow,

freezing rain, blowing and drifting snow, these multiple factors may lead to closures at temperatures greater than -19 degrees.

We will continue to be diligent in our decision making during the winter season, using multiple factors and collaborating with our neighboring districts and law enforcement to determine whether to remain open or close schools for the day.

### **How many snow days do we make up in June?**

We have four days of emergency time built into our school calendar. These days can be used for weather or other emergency situations. This time does not need to be “made up” at the end of the year. If more days are needed for emergencies, the Michigan Department of Education determines the number of make-up days based on a report EPS submits. In our current calendar, two days are referenced as “snow make-up” days after the last day of school, but more days may be needed. Don’t plan that summer vacation too soon!

Be Safe,

James Knoll  
Superintendent of Edwardsburg Public Schools