



# New Holland-Middletown Elementary School District No. 88

75 1250<sup>th</sup> Street, Middletown, Illinois 62666

Phone 217-445-2656 Fax 217-445-2632

<http://www.nhm88.com>

Candi Shaver - Superintendent

---

## Dear New Holland-Middletown School Community,

With the potential of inclement weather soon approaching, I wanted to share some information and insight on snow days from the superintendent's perspective. While I do intend this to be informative and transparent, it is also designed in a Q/A fashion to speak plain language and get to the essence of questions around snow days/E-Learning days.

Canceling school is one of the more complex decisions a superintendent must make. The decision to delay, dismiss early, or close schools due to inclement weather has an enormous effect on all of our families. The following information may help you understand the process that is used when making this critical decision.

This year, the district elected not to make use of e-learning days for use if needed for inclement weather or for emergency due to the hardships imposed on both families of our students and staff. **All days taken for inclement weather this winter will be snow days.** I am hoping that we don't have to use any of these snow days; however, in being realistic we will.

### **When inclement weather impacts the District, the decision to dismiss, delay or close schools based upon a careful analysis of the following factors:**

- By driving some of our roads and assessing key roads/intersections that our buses need to navigate. .
- By assessing the available information on road conditions from law enforcement, our drivers/maintenance staff, and road commissioners which govern areas of our district.
- By assessing the amount of accumulated snow and/or ice, or the density of the fog.
- By assessing the visibility.
- By determining whether or not the precipitation/fog is predicted to continue throughout the day.
- By assessing the temperature and wind chill.
- By determining the impact on our transportation (buses).
- By examining weather predictions from satellite systems, local radar and the National Weather Service.
- By assessing the timing of the storm/fog.
- By holding discussions with area Superintendents beginning the prior evening and continuing again around 4:00 am

***Learning is our #1 Priority***

Generally, if our buses can safely travel, then we will choose to operate in most cases. If we perceive it to be unsafe and a “NO GO” – then I will immediately inform all staff, send an all-call text and email, and inform local news media.

## **Questions/Answers**

**Who makes the decision on whether to delay, dismiss early or cancel school?**

As the Superintendent, I am tasked with this complex responsibility.

**When is the decision made?**

I will make every attempt to communicate a cancellation of school no later than 6:30 am or the previous night or day. We will initiate the automated call/text and email system, and notify News Channel 20. We will also post on our school’s Facebook page. If a school day is delayed or dismissed early, the same contacts will be notified.

**Will we close school if conditions worsen (early dismissal)?**

If weather conditions worsen, I will be watchful, but reluctant to dismiss early. If we send students (especially younger students) back home, some will return to empty houses. However, there may be a time we will dismiss early, in order to get students home before a storm worsens. I am hoping this will be a rare occasion. If this does happen, we will utilize the automated call system immediately to notify parents.

**Will meals be provided to students on inclement weather days?**

There will be no meals provided to students for school being canceled.

**If school releases early (we get to school and bad weather comes and we get out early) are activities canceled for that evening?**

Yes

**Snow days burden parents with child care.**

I know. I don’t like them either.

**We should never close for cold. Tell kids to bundle up.**

We try, but many teens and pre-teenage students especially wear hoodies to school despite the temperature. In addition, we do not provide transportation from each student’s house, and some travel to a bus stop location. We need to account for their walk to the bus stop and the fact that cold weather makes it more possible for buses to be late due to mechanical failure.

**Try a delayed start and see what it looks like at 10:00 am**

We do have a delayed start schedule. However, that isn’t as easy as it sounds. Preparing for changes to breakfast and lunch with our provider district can be challenging. In addition, orchestrating bus drivers and route changes for all of our satellite locations such as Lincoln Academy, District 27, West Lincoln Broadwell, as well as our Bloomington transportation location can be very challenging. We also know that delayed starts remain to be an issue with many of our families who must find appropriate child care either way - for a full closure or delayed beginning of the day.

**It is fine in my town or around my neighborhood**



***Learning is our #1 Priority***



We serve a large area. Our rural nature and bus routes can be extremely dangerous with snow and ice. When it is a coin flip call, I will use my best judgment to keep kids safe and listen to our local road commissioners, law enforcement, and drivers.

**A couple of suggestions for partnering with us  
for your child's safety in the winter weather:**

- Please ensure that your child/ren have appropriate attire for the weather. This includes a coat, gloves, hat, etc. I know that the older students don't always like this, but it is for their safety. We never want to experience students being stuck on buses that have broken down and not been dressed appropriately that got very cold until a spare bus could get there.
- Have a back-up plan in the event I do have to cancel school during the school day once students arrive. Please know that I am very hesitant in ever doing this, but weather is unpredictable.
- Please ensure that you have a plan for your child/ren to get into the house, and have a plan on how your child/ren will gain access to your house if there is no electricity with either a key or the help of a neighbor or family member, etc.

There may be times that you believe we should have canceled school or when you believe school should have been in session. Our District boundaries encompass portions of three counties: Logan, Mason and Menard, and this means that the geographical make-up and conditions for portions of our District vary. The final decision on whether to cancel school or not is based upon the overall condition of the District and the safety of all of our children. **If you ever do not feel it is safe for your child to get to school, use your best judgment as to whether he/she should attend. Please call the school office and let them know.**

In summary, this is a tough decision to make. I wanted to be transparent about the factors that play a role in determining whether we have a snow day or not. While many may be angry we weren't/were in school on a particular day, I hope you can respect the process.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at (217) 445-2421 or email [cshaver@nhm88.com](mailto:cshaver@nhm88.com).

**Candi Shaver**  
**Superintendent**

***Learning is our #1 Priority***