

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 15

Office of the Superintendent
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Joshua D. Smith
Superintendent of Schools



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Dear Parent or Guardian:

One of the advantages of being a New Englander is that we can always count on the weather to be a topic of conversation. As we enter the fall season, the weather's impact on our ability to operate school as planned will be more of an issue. As a district we place student safety before all else. Providing safe transportation to and from school each day is a primary function of the district. We also believe that being in school is important and unplanned interruptions to the school schedule create disruptions to learning and other logistical complexities. Decisions about weather are complex and made with the best information available. Student safety is the primary factor, but we do recognize that disruptions to routines are also challenges to families. We recommend you create a contingency plan so that adjustments are easier when the time comes. Text based notification will be the fastest way we can deliver information and if you have not already register to receive notification via text, I would encourage you to do so using the links at the end of this letter.

Occasionally, there are inquiries about procedures for closing schools due to inclement weather. As we enter a time where weather will play a factor, please see some of the common weather related questions and answers below.

1. How is the decision made to delay, dismiss early or close schools?

Decisions regarding school closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals are made by the Superintendent in consultation with the local police and highway departments, the school bus company, and area weather forecasters. The first consideration in making these decisions is student safety. Road conditions are obviously a critical factor when making the decision and it is a difficult determination even when considering experienced car and bus drivers. ***For high school drivers, please use your judgment as parents about whether your son/daughter should drive in inclement weather. If there is any doubt on days that we are open, please have them take the bus.***

2. How do I find out if schools are closed or delayed?

A variety of communication tools are used to announce any change to the district's regular schedule. The **School Delays and Cancellations page** of the district website provides a complete listing and information to register where necessary. These tools include:

Region 15 Public Schools website: Notification of school delays, closings and early dismissal are posted on the district's homepage at www.region15.org. Parents are also encouraged to sign up for email notification through www.ctweather.com by selecting "e-Notifications." There is a link to this site on the school district's website.

School Messenger: Text message, District Twitter alerts, FaceBook alerts: Text message, Twitter announcements, and FaceBook go out as soon as a decision is made to delay or close school or in the event of early dismissal. **Telephone notification follows later in the morning, usually around 6:00 a.m. for delays or closings.** **[*For more information on School Messenger, click here.](#)**

*You must opt-in to receive text notifications from the district. More information can be found on the district website under "[School Messenger Information Page](#)"

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TV: Channel 3 (WFSB) Channel 6/NBC 30 (WVIT) Channel 8 (WTNH) FOX61 (WTIC)
Sometimes there are technical difficulties with websites, email or the media. If in doubt, please check multiple sources.

3. How are delayed openings handled?

Morning decisions about **delayed openings** are usually made between 4:45 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. based on road conditions and weather forecasts available at that hour. Decisions must be made at that point because the first school buses begin their morning runs at approximately 6:00 a.m.

School Start Times with a 2 Hour Delayed Opening:

High School: 9:20 am – 2:05 pm

Middle Schools: 10:05 am – 2:45 pm

Elementary Schools: 11:00 am – 3:40 pm

BAS Program: Before school session in on a 90 minute delay

Friends Together: Morning Session Cancelled; Full Day & Afternoon Classes report at 1:00 p.m.

School Start Times with a 3 Hour Delayed Opening:

High School: 10:20 am – 2:05 pm

Middle Schools: 11:05 am – 2:45 pm

Elementary Schools: 12:00 pm – 3:40 pm

BAS Program: Before school session starts at 9:30 am

Friends Together: Morning Session Cancelled; Full Day & Afternoon Classes report at 1:00 p.m.

If the weather does not improve during the two-hour delay period, a decision to close school for the day may be made. Parents and guardians should check the district website and TV stations listed above until the delay period has passed in order to make sure that school will be in session. A text message and social media alert updates will also be sent.

4. How am I notified in the event of an early dismissal?

The district will use all the tools referenced above. In addition, parents will be notified using the **School Messenger system**. The district will use this **automated calling system to notify parents in the event of an unscheduled early dismissal**. This service allows us to send a voice mail message to all parents within minutes.

Decisions about **early dismissal** due to weather problems are usually made during the morning and announced between **9:45 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.** During weather related early dismissals, students are dismissed two hours and 15 minutes early. **Afternoon BAS Pre-K classes are canceled when early dismissal occurs.**

Please note below the normal school hours for the 2019-20 school year.

High School: School day begins at 7:20 am and dismisses at 2:05 pm

Middle Schools: School day begins at 8:05 am and dismisses at 2:45 pm

Elementary Schools: School day begins at 9:00 am and dismisses at 3:40 pm

School Dismissal Times with a Planned Early Dismissal for conferences and professional development are already on the calendar.

High School: 11:30 am No lunch served

Middle Schools: 12:15 pm No lunch served

Elementary Schools: 1:00 pm Lunch is served

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BAS: Open 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Friends Together: Morning Session: 9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.; Afternoon Session: 10:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

School Dismissal Times with an Emergency Early Dismissal:

High School: 10:30 am No lunch served

Middle School: 11:05 am No lunch served

Elementary Schools: 12:05 pm No lunch served

BAS Program: Afternoon session is cancelled

Friends Together: Morning Session: 10:30 a.m.; Afternoon session is cancelled.

The ability to deliver a message is only as successful as the contact information that we have for your child, therefore, please make certain that your child's school has the most up-to-date direct dial numbers. This information is updated annually at the beginning of the school year. If your information changes after the annual update please let your child's school know immediately.

5. What about school sponsored events (concerts, athletics, special events and afterschool activities) on days when school is dismissed early or closed?

All school sponsored events are canceled if school is closed or dismissed early.

6. Why are schools sometimes closed when the weather doesn't seem to be too bad?

Given the uncertainty of weather forecasts, conditions can change considerably between 5:45 a.m. and normal school opening time. Occasionally, a storm warning will cause us to close schools, but a few hours later the storm may turn in another direction. We would rather have the schools closed on such a day than to risk having the storm hit while we have thousands of children in the schools or on the roads.

7. What if schools are open but my road is dangerous?

Region 15 is a very large geographic area with a variety of elevations and terrain. It is quite possible for conditions on a few roads to be hazardous while conditions are good throughout the rest of the town. You should keep your child home if you believe that conditions on your particular street are unsafe. Inform the school by way of a phone call or an absence note that your child was absent due to hazardous road conditions and as long as your student has less than 9 absences, it will be excused.

8. What can I do if I am concerned that my child might come home to an empty house in the event of an early closing?

Parents and guardians should arrange with neighbors or friends to handle situations where young children might arrive home from school to find no one there. Please make sure your children know what to do in the event you are delayed. Again, you can stay informed about early closing decisions through our various communication tools: texts*, social media alerts, watching one of the TV stations listed, or by checking the district website at www.region15.org.

Changes in school hours can be difficult to handle given a family's busy schedule. I appreciate your understanding that safety considerations must come first and that making decisions that affect thousands of people in a large area while facing uncertain weather forecasts can be difficult. Your patience and cooperation are appreciated.

Best wishes to you and your child for a rewarding and productive school experience in the coming year.

Very truly yours,



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