

# Vicksburg Warren School District

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Winter 2009-2010

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The winter season is upon us. Our district staff understands that our decision to open or close schools in bad weather has a big effect on families. We also understand that our students are better served - both academically and socially - by being in school; but as always, our top priority is the safety of our students.

## ❖ HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DECISIONS?

Please understand that we make the decision to open or close the schools in bad weather based on a careful analysis of all relevant factors, such as:

- **Information on road conditions from transportation staff, the police, and the sheriff.** We must give careful consideration to the most dangerous roads in the district. Even if your street looks clear, travel elsewhere in the district may be dangerous. Also, we must consider that some high school students drive to school.
- **Amount of snow and ice accumulated.**
- **Whether precipitation is continuing.**
- **Building conditions (such as whether we have electricity and heat.)**
- **Parking lot conditions.** Administrators talk to maintenance and custodial staff members who are responsible for clearing and treating school parking lots and sidewalks.
- **Temperature and wind chill.** Please remember that some of our students walk to school and some must wait outside for the bus.
- **Weather predictions.** We prefer not making our decision based on weather predictions, which are not always accurate; but sometimes this is unavoidable.
- **What other school districts are doing.** We also share information with other local districts and check whether they are opening or closing.

## ❖ WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

As superintendent of schools, I am responsible for the final decision, based on the above factors and recommendations from law enforcement and emergency services.

## ❖ HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?

Tune to River 101, WVBY 95.5, Z106.7, 98 Mix, 90.1, WRTM 100.5, 105.5, Miss103 FM, Cable Channels 16 (VWSD's channel) and 23 (City of Vicksburg's channel), and local TV stations (16, 12, and 3) for current information on school closings. Information will also be posted on the District website, [www.vwsd.k12.ms.us](http://www.vwsd.k12.ms.us), and sent via email to parents who have given us their email addresses and via text message to parents who have given us their cell phone numbers. Please do not call the school unless it is an emergency.

## ❖ WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?

We must make the decision by 5:30 AM or earlier so we can notify radio and TV stations. If we wait longer to announce a closing, some parents will have already left for work, leaving children unsupervised.

## ❖ WILL WE CLOSE SCHOOL IF CONDITIONS WORSEN?

Keep in mind that, even if weather conditions worsen, we cannot reverse our decision in the morning without endangering students. Once we make the decision to open schools, many parents rely on it and leave for work. If we then send students right back home, many will return to unsupervised bus stops and empty houses. If conditions get worse during the school day, we may need to have an early dismissal, in which case we will notify the media and give as much advanced notice as possible.

Sincerely,

James Price  
Superintendent