



Tomorrow's News Today

News From the Tomorrow River School District

From Michael Toelle, District Administrator

February 2018

To Close or Not to Close

Since we just had the most challenging morning of the year weather-wise, I thought it would be timely to start by adding a few comments to my information from last month. The rain, sleet, and the possibility of freezing temperatures setting in were all factors in deciding whether to close school January 22nd. In my last article, I stated that the decision to close is typically made by 6:15 a.m., but the decision that morning wasn't communicated until 6:35. Why? It was one of those questionable mornings with lots of rain, and up until 6:25, every local administrator I was in contact with was committed to holding school. All of a sudden, at 6:26, my text message stream changed to administrators starting to cancel. First was Almond, then Wild Rose, and at 6:35 when Tri-County texted they were closing, Amherst was the last school still open. At that time I chose to follow suit and cancel.

You may be wondering why closing or staying open is so dependent on what the other local districts do. In today's world, as a district, we bear a lot of liability based on the decisions we make on the behalf of our taxpayers, families, and students. If all the schools around us closed due to weather and we still held school, and if an accident did occur it would weigh heavily upon us if students were injured, or even worse, fatally injured while traveling to or from school. When we think of safety and road conditions, we not only think about the buses picking up students, but consideration is also given to the student drivers. It's astounding how many students drive to school compared to 25 years ago, and we're well aware that not all the drivers are seasoned veterans and ready to be driving on bad roads. So please remember, when school is being closed, it is for the safety of the students, bus drivers, parents, and staff.

I also want to reiterate my safety message from last month, emphasizing that using personal judgment based on your local conditions is critical. Being slightly late will never make or break your child's education. Again, this is not a free pass to keep your child home one day per week or to repeatedly be late during the winter, just a means of using your judgement in keeping your family safe.

With the use of the 22nd for a snow day, April 27th will now turn into an instruction day for all students. We're still very early in the winter season so likely we'll see a few more questionable days and possible school closures. Hopefully, on February 2nd, Punxsutawney Phil will predict an early spring instead of another six weeks of cold winter weather. I know I'll be watching closely to see if Punxsutawney Phil comes out of his burrow at sunrise and sees his shadow,

which means winter will be around for a little while longer. However, I'm hoping Punxsutawney Phil doesn't see his shadow and determines spring weather is on its way!

As always, feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns about closing school, school activities, curriculum, or just have a general question. Please remember: my door is always open, my computer is on, and my phone is available to help make the school experience for every child the best possible.

Until next month, stay warm and take some time to enjoy winter activities with your children.