



---

---

**BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**David Hills**

**Chief Operations Officer**

**64 Bailey Ave.**

**Buffalo, New York 14220**

**(716) 816-3535**

**(716) 445-7116**

**Email [dhills@buffaloschools.org](mailto:dhills@buffaloschools.org)**

**To:** All Buffalo Public Schools Stakeholders  
**From:** David Hills, Chief Operations Officer  
**Date:** October 26, 2022  
**Re:** Procedures for Emergency School Closing due to Severe Weather Events or Emergency Conditions

---

---

The decision to close schools is multi-layered and very complex. While many factors are balanced in the consideration, student and staff safety are the priority factors driving all closure decisions. In the best-case scenario, a severe weather event is forecasted, and decisions will be made in a timely fashion. However, occasionally the decision needs to be made quickly and decisively and in the best interest of the safety of our students and staff.

If the decision is made to close, the district's School Connect-ed phone, text and email system will send out a message. A prominent notice will be placed on the district website ([www.buffaloschools.org](http://www.buffaloschools.org)) and on district sponsored social media. Additionally, WBEN 930 radio and television stations will be contacted to add to their closure notifications. No bus transportation will be provided on days when the Buffalo Schools are closed.

If a severe weather event is forecasted, the Buffalo Public Schools will consult with the BPS Department of Transportation, BPS Department of School Plant Operations, City of Buffalo Public Works, First Student, and Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority. A forecast of a severe weather event will be assessed starting at 11:00 am and continuing through 8:00 pm. The final decision to close schools lies with the Superintendent of Schools.

If an unanticipated overnight severe weather event occurs, as early as 3:00 am conversations with the BPS Department of Transportation, BPS Department of School Plant Operations, City of Buffalo Public Works, First Student, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority and Police and Fire overnight dispatchers will commence. The assessment will continue until a decisive amount of information is collected, up to 5:00 am. The final decision to close schools will lie with the Superintendent of Schools.

If an isolated emergency impacts the ability to safely operate any of our school sites, we will make the site-based school closure decision based on all available information. Such isolated emergencies may potentially include: power outages, water main breaks, gas leak, no heat, or other circumstances.

We gather as much relevant information as possible and base our decision on that analysis. This includes:

- Information on road conditions, projected clearance of all routes, highway closures, and rate of snow and ice accumulation from the BPS Department of Transportation, City of Buffalo Public Works, First Student, and Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority.
- Weather predictions of current and anticipated precipitation, snow accumulation, ice cover, temperature, and wind chill.
- Verification of building status, continued utility services, staff ability to clear our parking lots, access driveways, and sidewalks
- Patterns in other similarly affected districts.

Wind-chill factors will be considered in closure decisions. The Buffalo Schools will consider closure in the case of wind chill that reaches -18 degrees. The National Weather Service is used as a guideline in deciding to close schools:

- Cautionary: Wind Chills of -18 to -20 degrees
- Advisory: Wind Chills of -25 degrees or below

*“Putting children and families first to ensure high academic achievement for all”*

- Warning: Wind Chills of -35 degrees or below
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that no one should be outside with unprotected skin with wind-chill factors in the range of -40 degrees or below.

The following potential closures are possible.

- All staff and students stay home and do not participate remotely.
- All staff and students stay home and participate remotely in learning and teaching.
- All staff are to report, students stay home and do not participate remotely.
- All staff are to report, students stay home and participate remotely in learning.

The decision to implement any of these closure modalities will depend on the circumstances of the closure. The decision to close schools and to not require staff to report will be based on dangerous driving conditions, road or thruway closure, existing driving advisory or driving ban, widespread power outage, or other factors. All staff will include school-based staff and Central Office staff. Certain staff may be determined to be essential and may need to report.

The forecast may warrant the cancellation of after school or evening activities. The Director of Transportation and Chief Operating Officer are responsible for monitoring conditions and forecasts during the day and to communicate that a cancellation of afterschool and evening activities may be necessary. The decision to cancel after-school and evening activities will be made and communicated by 12:00 pm. The cancellation of after school activities will include the cancellation of Adult Education programming. The final decision to cancel after-school and evening activities lies with the Superintendent of Schools. The communication protocol will be the same as it is for a whole day school closure.

There are frequent Saturday Community School Events and other programming that may be affected by severe weather. The decision to cancel all Saturday events will be made by 2:00 pm on the Friday before the event. The cancellation of Saturday activities will include the cancellation of Adult Education programming. If there is scheduled admissions testing on a Saturday where there are issues with severe weather, that testing may or may not be exempt from the announced closure. The final decision to cancel Saturday activities lies with the Superintendent of Schools. The communication protocol will be the same as it is for a whole day school closure.