

# W T Schools



## ***A Community of 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Learners***

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## **WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL SCHEDULE DECISIONS & THE 2017-18 WTS SCHOOL CALENDAR**

January 10, 2017

Dear Parents and Faculty,

With the wintry season having arrived I would like to take a few moments to provide you with information regarding inclement winter weather and the potential impact such may have on school operations. The information presented here (in a Q&A format) will be useful for everyone to review, and especially helpful to those of you who are new to our school family. In addition, this communication addresses the topic of the 2017-2018 school calendar in response to the West Morris Regional High School District's recent calendar adoption for the upcoming school year.

### **~ WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL CLOSING DECISIONS - A Q & A FOR PARENTS & FACULTY ~**

**How are Weather-related School Closing/Delay Decisions Made?** When making decisions regarding possible school closings or delays, safety is always a top priority. WTS gathers as much information as possible including, but not limited to, the following when making weather-related scheduling decisions:

- ***Weather Conditions/Forecasts:*** The type of precipitation, the current amounts, and the projected totals are all critical factors, as is the timing of the weather event. WTS consults with local meteorologists who provide expert guidance. School closings, delayed openings, or abbreviated school days may be declared based on the forecast at hand or sudden changes in weather conditions.
- ***Road/Driving Conditions (primary, secondary, and tertiary):*** The Washington Township Police Department, the Department of Public Works, and the district's Transportation Supervisor (Mr. Todd) provide timely information regarding road/driving conditions. Because Washington Township has such diverse topography, roads may be clear in some areas and hazardous in others. Therefore, WTS must take into account the condition of all roads, especially the most challenging roads here in the township.
- ***Parking Lot and Walkway Conditions:*** Our custodial and maintenance crews stand ready to remove snow from school parking lots and walkways. Normally, if the roads are hazardous our lots and sidewalks also need specialized maintenance. WTS is committed to clearing snow and treating ice prior to the opening of school.

- **Consultation with Partner Districts:** WTS consults with the West Morris Regional, Chester, and Mendham school districts, typically beginning at 4:00 a.m., in an effort to make a mutual decision whenever feasible (especially where Washington Township Schools and West Morris Regional are concerned).

**Are children ever sent home during the school day due to inclement weather?** Although the answer to this question is “maybe” the possibility is highly unlikely. With our ability today to monitor weather patterns and conditions, it would be unusual to bring the children into school and then send them home early. In the event a sudden snow accumulation occurs during the school day the DPW will be out clearing snow while the children are safe inside. It is possible that a single session day could be called the evening before if, for example, a winter storm watch/warning is forecasted for the following afternoon.

**Who Makes the Decision to Close or Delay?** Although information is discussed with several parties, I am responsible for the final decision.

**When are Such Decisions Made?** A decision to close school for the entire day must be made no later than 7:00 a.m. due to the district’s bus transportation schedules. Most often, such decisions are made earlier prior to everyone leaving for work or school (hence the early, but not too early, morning phone call). There may be situations that warrant decisions being made the evening before a particular school day. In such situations an evening communication is issued.

**How are Parents and Faculty Notified?** WTS uses the new **Blackboard Communication System** to notify parents and staff of changes in the school schedule due to weather or other emergencies. In addition, announcements are broadcast via WRNJ, New Jersey 101.5, TV Channel ABC 7 and [www.wtschools.org](http://www.wtschools.org) . Please be sure your contact information is updated in the OnCourse (parents) and Alio (staff) databases.

## ~ SCHOOL CALENDAR ~

You may have learned this week that the West Morris Regional High School District released its 2017-2018 School Calendar. As a point of information, the high school district has opted for an earlier than usual student start date. Specifically, Monday, August 28, 2017 was selected to enable students to gain increased instructional time in advance of the high school’s comprehensive spring assessment schedule: AP, IB, SAT, ACT, PARCC and NJ Biology Assessment. Please note that the Washington Township Schools typically adopts and shares its calendar for the upcoming school year in March. However, WTS is now planning its calendar adoption for late February to better enable parents who have children in both districts to plan accordingly.

As always, please feel free to contact me should you have any questions as our Central Office is here to serve our school community.

Happy New Year!



Jeffrey S. Mohre  
*Superintendent of Schools*