



Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians
From: Mark McQueen, Superintendent
Date: September 6, 2024

9/5/24 Weathering the Storm: Understanding Our Severe Weather Protocols

Severe weather events are a reality we must face, and understanding our decision-making process during these times can provide reassurance and clarity. At Bay District Schools, the safety of our students and staff is our top priority, and we have well-established protocols to handle inclement weather effectively.

When severe weather is forecast, we immediately consult with local meteorologists and collaborate with our Bay County Emergency Operations Center partners to assess the potential impact. These experts provide us with precise, up-to-date information that guides our decisions. Simultaneously, we hold numerous meetings and conference calls with key stakeholders to plan for every possible scenario, drawing on our extensive experience with past hurricanes, tornadoes, and tropical storms.

Our preparation focuses on several key areas:

- **School Bus Safety:** We evaluate the safety of school buses on the roads, considering factors like wind speeds and road conditions. We also assess potential bridge closures and the passability on dirt roads during heavy rains.
- **School Facilities:** It is crucial to ensure that our school buildings can withstand severe weather conditions. We examine the structural integrity of the facilities to ensure they are safe from high winds and flooding.

Deciding to cancel school is not taken lightly. We understand that our decision impacts students, staff, businesses, hospitals, the military community, and more. Therefore, we carefully weigh the broader implications, including the effects on the school calendar and the necessity of make-up days.

With more than 28,000 students and 3,500 employees relying on these decisions, it's essential for parents and guardians to keep their contact information updated in the Parent Portal.

Accurate information allows us to communicate timely updates about school closures or delays.

Our track record shows a commitment to erring on the side of caution, always prioritizing safety. We critically evaluate each situation to ensure the security of our community. By understanding the extensive processes we undertake, we hope to provide you with confidence in our approach.

Proactive communication is critical. We strive to make timely decisions and keep you informed every step of the way. Our past experiences have made us more resilient and better prepared for future storms. Together, we can ensure a safe environment for our students and staff.

Thank you for your trust and confidence in Bay District Schools as we navigate these challenges. With a laser-like focus on safety and security, we remain committed to putting the "A" back in Bay.