

## Two Hour Delays, Early Dismissals, Cancellation of School--Why and when and how can it be improved?

Our recent winter season caused questions about the process, timing, and rationale for delays/cancellations. How are these decisions made? Here is an explanation.

In general, the area superintendents talk throughout the day whenever extreme cold or severe weather is predicted. We usually have a conference call that evening and if we are certain of the conditions we announce delays/cancellations the night before. We usually make a collaborative decision.

If a decision can't be made the night before, we drive the roads starting around 4 a.m. The director of transportation, the director of finance/operations and I talk around 4:30. Area superintendents typically hold a conference call after 5 a.m. We compare notes on conditions throughout the county and share what decision we are making for our own district. As soon as Avon's decision is made we notify the media and send out a message via our List Serve.

A few points to keep in mind:

- We recognize that for many parents an early dismissal or a delayed start is a tremendous inconvenience. While we keep this in mind, student safety is our first consideration.
- This is an imperfect process. We make the best decision we can using the information we have. The decisions in Marion County may be different than those in Hendricks County, where we transport the vast majority of our students.
- Parents are the ultimate decision makers about children attending school. If you think our decision to hold school is wrong, you as a parent have every right to keep your child home. Likewise if you have a teenage driver for whom driving conditions are too tricky, have him/her ride the bus.
- Our List Serve is the fastest way to hear about delays, early dismissals, and cancellations. If you have not already done so, we urge you to sign up. Go to [www.avon-schools.org](http://www.avon-schools.org) and sign up on the left side of the home page.
- There is no absolute temperature that causes a delay. Factors such as precipitation, wind chill, and when daylight begins are also considered.
- Early sports practices (6 a.m. starts) will always be an issue. We encourage you to work with your coach on a plan for days when school might be delayed or cancelled. We simply will not be able to guarantee your student athlete knows prior to leaving the house in some cases at 5:15.
- On days when weather forces us to dismiss early you can assist us by not calling the schools. Media will have the latest information. Our switchboards are inundated while we are simultaneously trying to mobilize over 100 buses and drivers. Also, make a plan with your children about what they should do in the event of an unanticipated early dismissal.
- Let's all take time to recognize the dedicated drivers and transportation department for managing a challenging job with professionalism and care for our students.

Finally, please know that we will make every effort to make the decision as soon as possible so as to minimize the inconvenience to all. I appreciate the communication and thank you for continuing our dialogue. Don't ever hesitate to contact me at 544-6000 or [mehoernemann@avon-schools.org](mailto:mehoernemann@avon-schools.org).

Respectfully,

Maggie Hoernemann  
Superintendent