

# Sherman County School

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*"Home of the Huskies"*

November 10, 2020

Dear Sherman County School District Students, Parents, Families and Staff,

The days are getting shorter, the temperature is dropping and we have already seen snow in Sherman County. It is obvious that the winter season has arrived. In the past, inclement weather and various types of emergencies caused the closing, early dismissal, or delay of school. One thing that the COVID-19 pandemic has created is the advent of distance learning. This has brought the proverbial "snow-day" quietly to an end.

In the past, the difficult decision to open, delay, or close school during inclement weather was based on many factors. Now the decision for student and staff safety will be made with the idea that we have a distance learning option that we are all familiar with and can pivot to on a moment's notice. Eliminating snow-days will remove the potential need to make up days at the end of the year. The plan moving forward will be one that we are already familiar with and have been implementing consistently through this school year. In lieu of snow-days for on-site students, we will utilize our current Friday virtual learning schedule which follows the already established half-day virtual learning approach. If, during a half day Friday week, an emergency closure prompts a CDL day, the half day virtual Friday will be changed to a full day on-site. The schedule to be followed, "A" or "B", will be announced along with the closure.

For the 2020-21 school year, this temporary plan will eliminate a complete school closure and 2- hour delay's (barring no power outages or countywide internet issues), but we still would have the potential of an early release if we are on-site and inclement weather necessitates a decision to send students and staff home early.

Please understand that we make the decision to open or close school during inclement weather conditions based on an extremely thorough analysis of all relevant factors continuing until a final decision is made prior to 6:00 a.m. These decisions are not always perfect and are often complicated by our varied elevations and unpredictable weather in our geographically diverse county. If a decision is made to open school during inclement weather or forecasted weather events, we completely understand that you as parents/guardians know what is best for your child. When school is closed or dismissed early, we will determine whether there will be athletics and other school functions or community use of the school if weather or early closure conditions improve.

If an early dismissal or closure occurs, we will communicate through our School Messenger system as well as post on our social media platforms. These modes of communication have proven to be very effective. Please remember that parents/guardians/staff can be prepared to receive prompt communication from the District by ensuring that phone numbers are up-to-date with school office staff. You can do this by calling Sherman County School at 541-565-3500. In addition, closings and early dismissals are also reported on local TV and Radio stations and on the web at [www.FlashAlert.net](http://www.FlashAlert.net).

In the event we need to implement or alter certain bus routes in order to open school, this may be communicated to you through the School Messenger system. Oftentimes representatives from Mid-Columbia Bus Company will personally contact certain families to communicate any alterations to transportation plans. Please understand that when we do decide to open Mid-Columbia Bus Company buses sometimes can be delayed on regularly scheduled bus routes due to a focus on traveling safe.

If you have any questions, please give me a call at Sherman County School at 541-565-3500 or send me an email at [wowens@sherman.k12.or.us](mailto:wowens@sherman.k12.or.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wes Owens".

Wes Owens