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As we gear up for colder weather, I wanted to share information as to how the decision to cancel school on cold or snowy days is made. The decision to cancel school is one that we take very seriously with the understanding that our goal is to attend school when possible. Obviously, the safety of our students is always our focus. Many factors are considered when making the decision. We start with the forecast and then the current weather conditions. To get the most accurate information possible, the National Weather Service's website: www.weather.gov is used. Unfortunately, as you are well aware, forecasts change and are not always accurate. For that reason, current conditions must be monitored starting early each morning that the weather is in question.

Additionally, we use local weather stations to get the most accurate temperature and wind readings as possible. This is extremely important when the concern is the wind chill. The National Weather Service's Wind Chill Chart is used to help determine when the wind chill becomes too dangerous for our students.

Based on the information provided by the NWS, frostbite becomes a possibility after 10 minutes of exposure in extreme conditions. We know this can be a problem for our students waiting for buses or walking to school. To reach that 10 minute level, the wind chill would need to be at least -32. A wind chill factor of -25 has always been our general target for cancelling school. If temps are between -20 and -25, there is leeway depending on any other variables that come into play (i.e. road conditions, forecast, snow, etc.).

We know our parents share our concern for their children and do their best to make certain their children are dressed appropriately when wind chills drop to this level. Our bus drivers also know that students may not be waiting outside quite as long on these days. We would encourage our parents to talk to their students about not wearing shorts and also wearing coats. While they are obviously comfortable in our classrooms once they arrive to school, a mechanical issue with their car or bus could put them in a dangerous situation with our upcoming forecasted lows. If there are any needs for winter clothing for your student, please call their counselor and we will make sure to get them what they need.

As is always the case, we will do our best to provide you with as much advance notice as possible when it is necessary to cancel school. It is our goal to make a decision regarding a cancellation by 6:00 A.M. whenever possible. When that decision is made, it will be shared with parents using our "blast" system and social media as well as tv station alerts.

Again, thank you for your assistance and understanding as we continue to deal with our Central Illinois winter weather. We will continue to make decisions regarding cancellations that keep all of our students and staff safe.

The opportunity is here.



The fire is within.