

MOUNT PLEASANT COTTAGE SCHOOL UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**SUBJECT: EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

The Superintendent is empowered to close the District Schools, delay the opening, or to dismiss students early in the event of hazardous conditions, including weather, which threaten the safety of students.

In making the decision to close schools, either the Superintendent or his/her designee shall consider many factors, including the following:

- 1) The availability of parent(s)/guardians(s) to receive the student at home in the event schools should be dismissed early.
- 2) The health and safety of students remaining in a school environment.
- 3) Weather conditions, both existing and predicted.
- 4) Driving and traffic conditions affecting public and private transportation facilities.
- 5) Continuance or discontinuance of the operations of business, commercial and professional people in the area.

Facts will be assembled from the appropriate agencies and organizations before any decisions are made. For example, the Highway Department, Police Department, Weather Bureau, transportation companies and other governmental agencies, as needed, will be called.

Following the decision, communications will begin for the total notification of the students and staff. Either the Superintendent or his/her designee shall notify the public media. Employees should listen to broadcasts beginning at 6 a.m. Any employee who is doubtful about reporting should contact his/her immediate supervisor.

Utility Outages

Operating a school building without electricity or water violates Commissioner's Regulation 155.7, "Health and Safety in Existing Educational Facilities." Included in this Regulation, among others, are the following items:

- 1) Inoperative mechanical systems resulting in inadequate ventilation.
- 2) Bathrooms lacking lights (electricity) or water (water main breaks).
- 3) Classrooms lacking lights.

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- 4) Dark corridors darkening after emergency lighting becomes weak.
- 5) Non-functioning sprinkler systems due to lack of water.
- 6) Smoke and fire control systems, including fire alarms, losing battery power.

Instances of school closings for power outages should be reported to the State Education Department (SED) through the District Superintendent as required by Commissioner's Regulation 155.17(h) for the School Safety Plan (School Emergency Management Plan).

Exception: Short-term outages of a determinative length may not necessitate school closing, provided the Superintendent/designee has consulted with SED Facilities Planning.

Delayed School Plan

When it appears likely that weather and/or street conditions will improve later in the morning, a "delayed school opening" announcement may be made to the public. Employees shall make an effort to report to their assignment at the regular starting time.

"A" Schedule (One hour delay in all school starting times):

All schools will begin one (1) hour later than normal starting times and dismiss at regular time.

"B" Schedule (Two hour delay in all school starting times):

All schools will begin two (2) hours later than normal starting times and dismiss at regular time.

Early Dismissal School Plan

When a sudden, unanticipated emergency condition, including weather alert, arises after school has commenced, and it is deemed appropriate to close schools and offices, the following actions will be followed:

- 1) The media will be called and the public will be informed of the decision.
- 2) Schools will be dismissed with dismissal time arranged to parallel the arrival of buses. No staff member may leave his/her assignment until all students have left the building (unless authorized to do so by the Principal).

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- 3) Elementary students can be released only to the custody of their parent(s)/guardian(s) or another designated adult.

Staff Assignments

The Superintendent is responsible for the effective operation of the Mount Pleasant Cottage School Union Free School District at all times. Under Education Law, Sections 1711 and 3012, the Superintendent is empowered to require certain groups of employees to work while other employees are not required to work because the absence of students reduces the productivity of these employees.

When schools are officially closed for students due to inclement weather or other emergency conditions:

- 1) In general, school-based personnel will not report with the exception of the building plant operators, custodians, maintenance, and janitorial staff, as per negotiated agreement.
- 2) The Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, the Transportation Supervisor and the Superintendent will report to work, along with other designated employees.
- 3) Principals will remain responsible for security of their schools and for seeing that the building and grounds are made as ready as possible for school on the next scheduled day.

Parent/Guardian Notifications

Principals have the responsibility to urge parents/guardians to make plans for the emergency supervision of their children should an all-day closing, a delayed opening, or an early closing of school be necessary.

Radio and television announcements, electronic mail (email), District website, or telephone trees may be used to notify staff members.