

Who makes the decision on what happens in the case of an emergency or inclement weather?

The Superintendent of Schools is charged with the responsibility of determining whether school should be delayed or closed on an emergency basis.

What factors are included in making the decision?

Several inputs (as appropriate) are utilized in the decision making process: situation reports, district personnel, weather forecasts, and safety reports from the Spring Lake Police Department and Spring Lake Department of Public Works. In addition, there is consultation and communication with area Superintendents.

What is the procedure used in making the decision to close or delay school?

Although the process does not always result in a delay or closing, it begins with situation reports and/or weather forecasts. Once potential impacts to school operation are identified, direct consultation with local agencies like the Spring Lake Police Department begins. If necessary; other agencies, information streams, and personnel are included in the discussion.

A decision to delay or close school is made as soon as possible. If it is obvious that current or future conditions are not safe, school is closed. If there is a potential to delay or close school, a decision will be made by 6:00 a.m. in order to ensure that families, staff, students, and partner organizations are notified in a timely manner.

Why delay?

Delaying the start of a school allows school officials, personnel, and Borough Services to gather additional information, monitor changing conditions, and/or use the time to prepare the campus and building interior for student arrival. Occasionally, it may be used to ensure the school building will have adequate staff coverage.

It is important to consider that not every delay will result in a closing and to plan accordingly. The delay gives until 8:00 a.m. to make the final call. If a closing is not announced by 8:00 a.m. then school will open.

Sometimes a decision is made to close or delay which does not seem to make sense to me?

At times, the decision-making process relies on the inexact science of predicting the weather. Our local conditions do not always reflect the regional forecasts, yet when looking at future conditions, these forecasts must be considered. Additionally, area conditions can sometimes vary greatly.

Furthermore, it is possible that problems develop that may be unrelated to weather and are not observable to the general public. School delays and/or closing may be triggered by a non-weather related situation.

What about early dismissal?

Although early dismissal presents complicated logistical hurdles, situations may arise that require the closing of school before the end of the typical school day. The same inputs are used in the decision making process, just on a more compressed timeline. Not always an option, the goal is to make a decision to close school early by 11 a.m.

Rationale for an early dismissal is to get the students home before the conditions become too hazardous at regular dismissal time. Early dismissal is implemented reluctantly and with the understanding that it disrupts everyone's day. When it appears that a safety concern threatens the safety of students or that removal of snow and ice cannot keep up with accumulation, we have an early dismissal. Otherwise, we will stay in school and allow Borough services and school personnel a chance to do their job.