



## **MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOL DELAYS AND CLOSINGS**

Because of unforeseen emergencies, usually related to the weather, school may be delayed, closed early, or closed entirely. This is a reminder to parents to make alternative child care arrangements well in advance of such occurrences. We are also writing to remind you that listening to the weather forecast is the first step in any plan. If the forecast indicates the possibility of a delay or closing, you should listen to the radio (WBZ, WESX, and WBUR), or watch television (Channel 4, Channel 5, Channel 7, Channel 25), or check online notices at [www.masconomet.org](http://www.masconomet.org). Sometimes a radio station or TV channel does not air our announcement despite the fact that we have called it in. If you do not hear an announcement for the Masconomet Regional School District when other area districts are listed, you should check another station or channel or call the Masconomet Regional School District's Emergency Closing Message by dialing 978-887-2323, and selecting OPTION 9. Additional information may be found in the Masconomet Calendar-Handbook on page 2.

People often ask how decisions are made regarding school delays and closures. With regard to weather related emergencies, the superintendent makes the ultimate decision. Consultations are made with the public works departments in the three towns, facilities personnel, and the elementary district superintendent. The superintendent monitors weather and road conditions to gauge not only if students can safely be transported to school, but also if they can be returned home again. Road conditions beyond the three towns are also of consequence as the superintendent weighs the likelihood of delays for employees, particularly teachers, in getting to work.

When the emergency is weather related, the process begins around 4:00 a.m. A preliminary decision must be made by approximately 5:30 a.m. because notification has to be given to radio stations, television stations, police, employees, food service, bus contractors, area districts, and others. If possible, a delayed opening is the preferred option. Conditions may be sufficiently hazardous or may deteriorate, however, requiring school to be cancelled. When storms or emergencies occur after students are in school, it is sometimes necessary to send them home

early. Taking into account weather and road conditions predicted for an early dismissal time as compared with the regular dismissal time, the superintendent must make a decision by approximately 10:30 a.m.

Other types of emergencies may require immediate evacuation and dismissal. This can be quite frustrating for working parents who must make child care arrangements, but delaying or closing school is a complicated decision involving many factors. It is not taken lightly because of the impact on so many people. The ultimate deciding factors are the safety of the students and the educational program. We appreciate your understanding when such decisions must be made.

The superintendent must make a decision based on all students in the district. Sometimes individual parents may want to exercise their own judgment regarding their children. In this case, they may decide to keep their children home or sign their children out before the school day ends. In addition, parents must weigh the advisability of having inexperienced student drivers behind the wheel when bad weather is forecast.

Transportation schedules can also be affected. Weather and road conditions often cause delays for pick-ups and drop-offs at bus stops. Buses are subject to the same conditions that plague commuters who travel by car, train or airplane.

As always, your understanding and patience are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Bent  
Superintendent of Schools