



**Midland Public Schools**  
*Inspiring Excellence*

# Superintendent Communiqué

**SPECIAL EDITION**

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## School Weather Cancellations

Let me start by saying, wow, what an unusual run of winter weather. I was attempting to recall how many weather days I have called in my dozen or so years as a Superintendent. It appears I have averaged 3-4 days a school year. As of today, we have used 12 days in 2018-19, nearly three weeks of lost instructional time. Safety must be our highest priority, but I really value instructional time. In fact, I am thinking many of our teachers, students and parents are concerned and feeling pressure over student academic growth and results on high-stake student assessments (IB, AP, SAT, State Assessments).

I also know when we call weather days, we also put many working parents in a bind to find supervision and care for their children. If we can be sure school has been called the night before, we will make that announcement to assist parents. I often have had parents discuss with me the difficulty of making arrangements at 5 or 6 in the morning. I offer a suggestion that may assist parents in this issue. When it appears schools may have the need to close the next day, would it be best to assume we are closing and make arrangements for your child's supervision/care? If we stay open, it may be easier to cancel the arrangement. In addition, if a parent feels the need to make arrangements as if we will be closed and then we stay open, the district will work with the family if the parent chooses to keep their child home.

Another concern is our hourly employees who lose compensation on weather days. We have been working with our hourly employee groups (bus drivers, preschool educators, paraprofessionals) who do not report to work and, therefore, do not receive compensation on weather days. In a normal school year where we have three or four cancellation days, most employee groups have the ability to use personal days and/or sick days after three cancellations. So in a normal weather year, these groups can cover a few days (ranging from one to three) depending on their situation. With this year's weather day count now being twelve, these groups have had a financial pinch placed on them that is not within their control. The district has assisted over the last two weeks by allowing bus drivers to come in and start/run/clean the buses and receive additional training; allowed preschool educators to report to work on lessons and curriculum; and paraprofessionals to use additional sick time and receive training to receive compensation. Even with this assistance they will have had several days without compensation.

To assist our teachers and students with the loss of instructional time, we will be exploring and working on E-learning assignments on weather days in the future.

As of today, we have used 12 weather days. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) allows school districts to be forgiven for six (6) weather-related days. We will apply to the State Superintendent for three additional days that the State Superintendent is allowed to grant under a set criteria of conditions. One of the conditions requires us to explore make-up days first and build into future calendars possible make-up days. The granting of this waiver is not a given, but MDE has indicated they will be granting them because of this winter's unusual weather patterns. That leaves us with three (3) days not forgiven that need to be scheduled as makeup days, knowing that we still have at least two months of winter-spring weather to be concerned about.

We will tentatively propose a schedule of **June 10, 11 and 12** as student makeup days. These makeup days need to be agreed upon and approved by the MPS Board of Education. There is legislation that is being drafted and possibly proposed that would forgive school districts for the three days that districts used during the Governor's State of Emergency during the week of January 28, 2019. We anticipate this legislation to take weeks, if not a month, to receive approval by the Michigan House, Senate and Governor. It is my belief this legislation has a better than 50% chance of being approved. We must schedule the makeup days and inform our community and staff for planning purposes, however, we can cancel them if the legislation is approved.

- 12 Weather days used as of February 13, 2019**
- 6 Weather or act of god days that are forgiven**
- 3 weather-related days that a district can apply to the State Supt. for approval**
- 3 makeup days that need to be rescheduled (possible State legislation may assist)**

