

Public Schools Branch

Weather Related Cancellation, Delay, or Early Dismissal

Weather related decisions to proceed with classes, cancel classes, delay opening, or dismiss early are made daily in consideration of weather patterns and forecasts, and existing and expected road and travel conditions. Decisions are made by a team of PSB personnel typically comprised of our Transportation Coordinator, Transportation Supervisor, Director of Corporate Services and/or our Leader of Corporate Services.

Weather Information

Decisions are made with particular concern for safe student and staff transportation to and from schools. This includes our student population that walks to school. The process of gathering relevant weather and road condition information begins days in advance by monitoring weather patterns and forecasts. Weather is monitored daily utilizing information sources such as:

- AMEC - <http://www.amec.com/services/specialist-services/weather-forecasting>
AMEC information is a paid and subscribed service. Forecast information is updated and received twice daily via direct email to subscriber accounts.
- Environment Canada - https://weather.gc.ca/forecast/canada/index_e.html?id=PE
- The Weather Network - <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/canada/prince-edward-island/charlottetown>
- AccuWeather - <http://www.accuweather.com/en/ca/pe/prince-edward-island-weather>

Other sources are also utilized from time to time. Forecast information from all sources is evaluated in concert in an attempt to develop the most accurate picture possible. We also make contact with meteorologists directly if further clarification is required.

Road Condition Information

Information pertaining to existing and expected road and travel conditions is gathered primarily from transportation experts at the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Energy (TIE).

- The PEI Department of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Energy employs Road Supervisors that travel and evaluate road conditions during periods of expected or existing inclement weather. In addition to being directly on the roads themselves, these supervisors are in contact with TIE plow operators and snow removal/sanding/salting contractors throughout their assigned region. Also taken into consideration are reports on current road conditions issued by RCMP and other emergency responders.
- A review of expectations and procedures was held with TIE staff in each county/region of the province in November. The PSB Transportation Coordinator and the PSB Transportation Supervisor are the primary liaisons with TIE Supervisors to evaluate current and expected road conditions for each region of the province. Our transportation coordinator and supervisor have been given access to TIE employee work schedules and contact information for all night and day Road Supervisors for the winter months.
- PSB Transportation personnel including our Transportation Coordinator and our Transportation Supervisor also travel regularly to evaluate road conditions first hand. In addition to site evaluation, should principals or school bus drivers feel conditions are unreasonable in their area (for any reason), they are encouraged to share their information with transportation services and receive further direction.

Summary

It takes many individuals working together to ensure appropriate decisions are made with regard to transportation and the safety of our students and staff. PSB officials and TIE staff work closely to evaluate what the expected travel conditions will be for the periods that our buses will be on the roads. As this exercise must involve predicting what future conditions will be like, it is not always possible to anticipate weather and/or travel conditions with 100 percent certainty. Decisions are always made with the best information available in the timeframe allotted and required.

Once a decision to proceed has been made, our team of highly trained, professional school bus drivers utilize their professional judgment and proceed using caution and practicing defensive driving skills at all times. On occasion, buses may need extra time in the morning or at dismissal to arrive safely at schools or home. Neither drivers nor students are reprimanded in any way for additional time that may be required to implement safety. Drivers are also required to use discretion regarding whether or not they travel on some roads. This has always been our direction and practice Island-wide during any period of inclement weather or with poor road conditions.

If anyone is aware of particular roads or areas of concern regarding road maintenance, snow removal, sanding or salting, they may contact the Highway Maintenance division of TIE directly. All such concerns that the PSB receives are forwarded to our counterparts at TIE in a continuous effort to work together in providing safe transportation for our students.

Lastly, our parents always have the final say regarding whether they feel their children should use school bus transportation on any given day. If a parent feels the situation in their specific area at any given time is not reasonably safe for their child, they always have the option of finding alternative transportation or keeping their child at home that day. Absenteeism for weather related safety reasons will not result in reprimand for any student.

We continue to work diligently to ensure our practices are effective and efficient province-wide in order that the concerns of students and their families in every area of the PSB are addressed in the most reasonable manner possible. We must all continue to work together to ensure safe student transportation throughout the entire school year. If you have any further specific questions, please feel free to forward them through your school principal to our transportation department.

Regards,



Dave Gillis
Leader of Corporate Services
Public Schools Branch