



## **SCHOOL DELAY/CANCELTION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS:**

One of the most difficult decisions school superintendents must make is the decision to delay school, cancel school, or go to school on time when weather conditions are less than ideal. Student safety is of utmost importance. Transportation to school on district-owned school buses and students driving themselves to school both play a part in these decisions. Balancing calamity day decisions with the role of providing the best educational experience possible for our students can be challenging.

When there is a chance of a calamity day, both Pike-Delta-York's Transportation Director and myself drive the roads. This begins around 5:00 am or earlier, and we each drive many miles throughout the district. We communicate and collaborate with what we are observing while being mindful of the weather radar. Ultimately, we feel we make the best decision with the information we have at that time for our district. Student safety is always, and will continue to be, the main topic of our discussions when these decisions are made.

Sometimes the decision at PDY is different than neighboring districts. This could be for a number of reasons. First, we only consider the conditions within our district's boundaries—conditions and local road crews' responses can be different from area to area (snow plowing and salting). Our conditions may be better or worse than our neighboring districts. Additionally, PDY's first bus departs the district's bus garage later than most, if not all, of our neighboring districts. This extra time allows for conditions to change, both naturally and because of road crew cleanup, permitting additional time to make the best decision for the safety of our students.

Of all the weather conditions that impact the delay or cancellation of schools, fog is the most difficult. Fog is generally difficult to predict, can present itself and then lift in a matter of minutes, and varies in its density and coverage of the area. There are times when we delay and the fog may be very light in some parts of our district, or not apparent at all, while in other areas of the district the fog may be much worse. Knowing fog conditions can change in a short period of time, the decision to delay or cancel due to fog will typically be made utilizing all the time allotted prior to the first bus leaving the district's bus garage.

Snow and ice are a different issue as generally the onset of snow and/or ice is predicted well ahead of time; however, understanding the "local" weather forecast is for the entire Toledo area, the predications can vary extensively or be incorrect, we will not act on a forecast alone. During snow and ice events, three factors determine the impact on our delay or cancellation; the severity of the storm, the timing of the storm, and the local response of the state, county, township, village, and our district's snow removal crews.

In any of the cases discussed above, the decision to delay school, cancel school, or go to school on time is very carefully considered. We do live in the snow-belt and there is an expectation for people in our geographic region to learn to drive with some snow and ice present. The key to safe driving in winter weather is to slow down.

Should you have any questions regarding the school calamity day decision process, please do not hesitate to call my office.

Sincerely,

Ted Haselman, Ed. D.  
Superintendent