



West Orange Public Schools
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West Orange, New Jersey 07052
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Superintendent of Schools

J. Scott Cascone, Ed. D.

EMERGENCY CLOSING AND DELAYED OPENING INFORMATION

2019-2020

Dear Parent, Guardian and Caregiver:

In the case of inclement weather, dangerous road conditions or other issues that could cause a delayed opening, early dismissal or school closing, there are multiple means by which you may obtain updated information. Please keep the following handy:

- We encourage all families to sign up to receive personal notifications via School Messenger. Directions are located under “For Parents” on the district website
 - You will be able to choose voice mail, email, and/or text message on your cell phone and voice mail on your home phone. Choosing all ensures receipt of messages. Note that this type of notification is categorized as non-emergency.
- Notice is posted on:
 - The district website woboe.org
 - West Orange Public Channel 36, Verizon 45
 - All of the following television stations
 - CBS
 - NBC
 - FOX
 - ABC
 - News 12 NJ
 - Fios1

The decision is based on weather conditions, road conditions, and the ability to transport nearly 5000 students safely via school bus. Understandably, we cannot make a decision based on any particular street or location in town but rather what is best for most. On inclement weather days, regardless if it is a regular opening or a delayed opening, it is a reasonable expectation that school buses will be delayed both to and from school.

The administration and I, like many of you, monitor the weather regularly. I remain in communication with other Essex County superintendents when it comes to inclement weather even though each district has their own unique circumstances. Few districts have as many steep hills as West Orange so travel in West Orange is very different than in other school districts in Essex County.

Evaluating weather reports and receiving updates on the condition of the roads, school parking lots and walkways provides me with the information needed to close schools, schedule a delayed opening, or call for an early dismissal. The safety of students, staff and parents remains the focus of my final decision.

- **Delayed Opening** is 90 minutes. Below is the delayed opening schedule:
 - Elementary School 10:15-3:23 (45 minute lunch)
 - Middle School 9:40-2:53 (25 minute lunch)
 - High School 9:00-2:15 (54 minute lunch)
 - BMELC 10:15-3:23 (45 minute lunch) *NO MORNING SESSION*

The main reason for a delayed opening is to provide the township public works and the school district buildings and grounds staff with additional time to clear the roads, parking lots and walkways. It also provides staff more time to safely drive to work in order to receive students. For students who ride a school bus, please add 90 minutes to your pick up time. *Hint: Calculating the time now allows for proper planning (i.e.: 7:22am bus pick up time = 8:52am delayed bus pick up time).*

- **Early Dismissal** may occur during the school day. The notification of an early dismissal could include cancellation or postponement of any after school events. Below is the schedule for early dismissal:
 - Elementary School 8:45-1:15 (20 minute lunch)
 - Middle School 8:10-12:30 (cafeteria closed)
 - High School 7:30-12:00 (cafeteria closed)
 - BMELC 8:45-1:15 (20 minute lunch) *NO AFTERNOON SESSION*

Early dismissal is implemented the least of all options as I recognize the challenge it creates for parents and guardians to collect their child(ren) from school or from the bus stop. This option is reserved as a last resort when the forecast indicates the roads will be hazardous at the regular dismissal time. If necessary and when possible, every effort is made to send the notification the night before. If your child attends an aftercare program, parents/guardians are to contact their after care provider regarding supervision for an early dismissal.

- **School Closed** When it becomes apparent that roads will not be safe or the districts parking lots or walkways are not clear, schools are closed in the interest of student, staff and parent safety. The notice to close schools is delivered as soon as possible. Conditions may make the decision extremely difficult with advance notice delivered as late as 5:30am the day of a closing.

New Jersey school law requires public schools to operate for 180 days from September through June. West Orange has built in three (3) additional days to the district calendar for inclement weather allowing for schools to be closed for three days without affecting the calendar. This year, should it be necessary to close schools beyond our allotment, school days will be made up in the following order: April 6, April 7, and June 23 so that West Orange can meet the 180 day mandate. If we are to experience more than six (6) closings, we are prepared as a school district to amend the calendar, conduct sessions on days currently marked closed, and if need be, extend the school year beyond June 22, 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Scott Cascone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "J. Scott" and last name "Cascone" clearly distinguishable.

J. Scott Cascone, Ed. D.
Superintendent