



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

**Mr. Jeffrey Rutzky**

EMERGENCY CLOSING AND DELAYED OPENING INFORMATION

Dear Parent/Guardian:

January 2016

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 places for you to get updated information. Keep this list for your reference:

- The district website [woboe.org](http://woboe.org)
- West Orange Public Channel 36, Verizon 45
- All of the following television stations
  - CBS
  - NBC
  - FOX
  - ABC
  - News 12 NJ
  - Fios1
- You can also receive personal notifications by following the directions under School Messenger located under “For Parents” on the district website
  - You will be able to choose voice mail, email, and/or text message on both your home phone and cell phone. Choosing all ensures receipt. Note that this type of notification is categorized as non-emergency.
  - We encourage all families to sign up for this service called “school messenger”.

The decision for the district is based on weather conditions, road conditions and the ability of our buses to transport nearly 5000 students. We need to make our decision based on what is best for most; we cannot make a decision based on any particular street or location in town.

On inclement weather days, regardless if it is a regular opening or a delayed opening, it is a reasonable expectation that buses will be running behind schedule both to and from school.

NJ school law requires public schools to have school in session 180 days. West Orange has built in 4 additional days for inclement weather. The district school calendar that is posted on the website indicates how we will make up days beyond the 4 in order to meet the 180 day mandate.

The administration, like many of you, monitors the weather regularly and takes into account projections from the National Weather Service as well as local channels, Accuweather.com and the Weather Channel. The Superintendent also communicates with other Essex County superintendents. Each district has some unique circumstances, for example: few districts deal with as many steep hills as we do and some districts do not provide busses for their students. Based on reports we make our best estimate of weather conditions that are likely to impact student arrival at school whether walking or riding the bus. The Superintendent makes the final decision but relies heavily on advice from both the West Orange Public Works regarding road conditions and our own Buildings & Grounds staff who are responsible for parking lots and walkways around our schools.

- Delayed Opening is 90 minutes. Below are the Delayed Opening times for elementary schools, middle schools and high school.
  - Elementary School 10:20-3:23 (45 minute lunch)
  - Middle School 9:40-2:53 (25 minute lunch)
  - High School 9:00-2:15 (54 minute lunch)

The main reason for a delayed opening is to give the town additional time to clear the roads and provide more time for staff who live a distance to get to school. Sometimes a delay is called the night before hoping that the weather will clear.

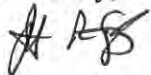
- Early Dismissal may occur when the forecast changes suddenly during the school day. The notification of an early dismissal will include cancellation or postponement of any afterschool events. Below are the Early Dismissal times for elementary schools, middle schools and high school.
  - Elementary School 8:45-1:15 (20 minute bag lunch)
  - Middle School 8:10-12:30 (no lunch)
  - High School 7:30-12:00 (no lunch)

Early dismissal is used the least of all options as we recognize the challenge it creates for parents. This option is only used as a last resort because all the forecasts indicate the roads at the regular dismissal time will be hazardous. If we anticipate using this option we make every effort to advise parents the night before. We do not leave elementary children at home unless an adult is present; our school bus drivers take this rule very seriously.

- School Closed
  - When it becomes apparent that roads will not be safe or schools not ready for students – or the governor declares a state of emergency, we close in the interest of student and staff safety.

I hope you found this information helpful.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Rutzky  
Superintendent