



1200 E. Fairmount Avenue Whitefish Bay, WI 53217

P: 414-963-3901 F: 414-963-3959

[www.wfbschools.com](http://www.wfbschools.com)

Dr. John W. Thomsen

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

### Canceling School is Based on Many Factors

Educating students in a safe, secure environment is the primary concern of every team member in the School District of Whitefish Bay. The two most common reasons for canceling school are excessive snow/ice and extreme cold. Obviously, both can result in dangerous circumstances for students, parents and staff, but road conditions and travel are more of a factor than temperature when determining whether or not to cancel school. The effects of the cold and wind can be countered by wearing appropriate clothing and limiting exposure. There is little or no recourse for unsafe road conditions caused by excessive ice or snow.

Among the factors that influence the decision to cancel school are weather reports, road conditions, and the ability to safely transport students to and from school. The decision typically involves consultation with a number of other entities, including neighboring school districts, the Whitefish Bay Police Department, and the Department of Public Works.

Another factor that school districts cannot ignore is the amount of instructional time scheduled during the school year. A minimum number of hours of instruction are required. If too much time is lost, districts have to reschedule days to make up for the lost time, which is often very inconvenient for families. When considering whether or not conditions merit canceling school, the preference to avoid having to schedule a make-up day(s) is of secondary importance.

The decision to cancel school is made as early as possible. The closing decision is typically made by 6:00 AM or earlier, so we can notify radio and TV stations. District Administrators do the best they can to make a timely decision with the available information. Once the decision is made, the School Messenger automated calling system is engaged and local television and radio stations are immediately notified so that parents, staff and students can plan accordingly. Some stations relay school closings in a timelier manner than others, so parents may want to check more than one station for the most up-to-date information. As the District Administrator, canceling school results in being a hero or a villain depending on each person's perspective.

The District will very likely remain open during all weather **advisories**. The data reveal that if the District closes during weather advisories, we would need to make up many days extending the school year into late June or even July.

Finally, the choice to cancel school is never easy and never taken lightly. It is important to note that parents always have the right to excuse their child from school if they feel conditions are unsafe. Always be sure to contact the school to report all absences. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this communication.

Yours in Education,

Dr. John W. Thomsen  
District Administrator