

## Schools' inclement weather plan starts early, notifies parents

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During the winter storm season, people often wonder why school is open, delayed or canceled.

They ask, "Why do buses run late one day and not the next? Why is school open at all when the roads are bad?"

Peninsula School District's 9,000 students live within a 120-square-mile area that includes a wide range of topographical features. There are hills and lowlands, thick forests and miles of shoreline.

Road conditions often vary widely during inclement weather, ranging from roadways that are clear to those covered with snow and ice.

We consider roads and all other information available when deciding whether to operate on a normal schedule, start late or close schools.

The process that is used to arrive at this determination is quite involved. Weather information is reviewed the day and night prior to the decision, and neighboring districts are consulted.

Beginning at 3 a.m., the superintendent, associate superintendent and transportation personnel drive emergency bus routes throughout the district.

At the same time, temperature predictions are reviewed to determine if roads will warm up enough to allow a late start, or if conditions are expected to worsen during the day, forcing a school closure.

If school is delayed or canceled, we attempt to inform families as soon as possible through a variety of ways.

We have a new telephone notification system this year, called School Messenger System, that automatically notifies all parents and guardians within 30 minutes of being launched.

Family emergency numbers are used in this system, so parents and guardians need to be sure that all numbers are updated at their children's schools.

We also use the Internet and local TV and radio stations to try to reach families.

The Peninsula School District Web address is [www.psd401.net](http://www.psd401.net), and it has emergency messages posted during inclement weather.

During questionable weather, the Web site will have information on whether school is late, closed or operating on normal schedules.

Local TV and radio stations air information, and the Peninsula School District radio station(s) can be tuned into

at 89.3 FM, 89.9 FM and 93.7 FM.

Parents may also call the District Emergency Information telephone number at 253-530-1088.

To check on emergency bus route information before the start of the storm season, families may check in their school offices or go to the district Web site under "Helpful Links" (on the left side of the screen).

Further, the district subscribes to a state emergency notification system to which parents may subscribe. School Report, through Public Schools Emergency Communications Systems (PSECS), will automatically send you an e-mail notifying you of any delays or closures; the notices are posted at [www.schoolreport.org](http://www.schoolreport.org).

While we attempt to make the best, safest decision for the entire district, we respect the fact that parents must make the final decision on whether their children attend school or not.