



# PARK RIDGE-NILES SCHOOL DISTRICT 64

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**Dr. Eric Olson**, *Superintendent of Schools*

December 11, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I hope you and your family have had a good first half of the school year. As we quickly approach winter break, it has started to feel that the cold weather may have arrived at last. So as we enter the winter season, I'd like to remind you of our school closing guidelines for the 2019-20 school year ([see the flyer here](#)). These are the same guidelines that have existed in the recent past.

District 64 coordinates guidelines with the high school (District 207), as well as the other elementary districts that feed into the high school (Districts 62, 63, and 79). The superintendents work together on closing decisions for severe weather-related conditions or other emergency situations that pertain to all of us.

### **Safety is our priority**

Our first priority is the safety of students and staff. At the same time, we know that closings create childcare and work schedule challenges for families. We understand that individual views of weather-related closings vary and that not everyone will always agree with district decisions.

For many reasons, we prefer to keep schools open. In making our decision on a given day, superintendents consult with local municipal departments and use National Weather Service ([weather.gov](#)) data. Some factors we consider include:

- safety of students and staff
- severity of weather (extreme cold, flooding, etc.)
- timing of the weather
- ability of vehicles to travel safely and students to walk safely to and from school
- operable condition of our buildings and the ability to maintain safe conditions around buildings, sidewalks, and parking lots

### **Wind Chill is a key factor in our closing guidelines**

Wind-chill notices from the National Weather Service are the primary meteorological source to determine and declare weather conditions, such as snow forecasts, wind-chill advisory, or wind-chill warning.

- **Advisory** - Schools will be in session when a wind-chill advisory is issued. A wind-chill advisory is typically issued when the wind chill is -20 degrees F or colder. The weather during a wind-chill advisory is not life threatening, but presents conditions that may result in inconvenience or pose moderate risk to safety.

- Warning - Schools will be closed under the condition of a wind-chill warning, which indicates life-threatening conditions and safety risks. Measures should be taken to safeguard life and property immediately. A wind-chill warning is typically issued when the wind-chill will be -30 degrees F or colder OR the actual temperature is -15 degrees F or colder.

### **How we inform parents and staff of closings**

When a decision is made to cancel school, parents and staff can expect to receive an automated phone call, email and text (for those who opted in for text messaging). It is the parent's responsibility to provide up-to-date contact information and/or preferences to the school office. School closing decisions will usually be made by 6:00 a.m. This allows superintendents to monitor weather overnight and avoid unnecessary closures. Weather closing information also is available through District 64 and school websites, recorded on District and school phone messages, [www.emergencyclosingcenter.com](http://www.emergencyclosingcenter.com), and broadcast on TV and radio stations.

### **Your Family Situation**

Any decision to cancel school or alter the school day is based on general safety conditions for all students and staff. Districts know that considerations may vary for each student or family. If, in the event of severe weather when schools are open, you feel it is unsafe to send your student to school, please feel free to keep your child(ren) home and contact the school office.

Again, the safety and well-being of your children is a top priority for Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 as we make decisions about weather-related closings. I wish you and your family a wonderful holiday season and a nice winter break.

Sincerely,



Dr. Eric Olson  
Superintendent