December 16, 2019

Dear Students and Parents of Holly Area Schools,

Winter is quickly approaching and with this change in season we can expect to experience a variety of weather conditions including snow, ice, and extreme wind chills. As part of our preparations, I would like to take this opportunity to review the process for handling school cancellations due to inclement weather.

I would also like to update everyone on the results of our recent delayed start option survey. We had over 1,400 responses. Thank you to everyone who provided us with input. Based on the results, over 40% of those surveyed did not support the idea of a delayed start. This is important information as a school day is not officially counted if we have less than 75% of students in attendance. In addition, we know from these results that many families at this time viewed this as an additional inconvenience. Therefore, we will not pursue the use of a delayed start option at this time.

It is always our desire to have our students in school. We know how important it is for students to be engaged in learning with teachers and peers. We recognize school cancellations can create an inconvenience for our Broncho families, and I’d like to thank our students, families, teachers and support staff for their understanding and patience.

At Holly Area Schools, the safety of our students, families and staff is our number one priority. Holly Area Schools comprises of 124 square miles. We are the 3rd largest district in the Tri-County Area. On any given day, the roads we live or travel on might be in perfect condition, while other local roads in the district may be unsafe.

A decision to close school is based on more than a weather forecast. Several factors are considered including the actual current weather and road conditions as well as the timing of possible inclement weather.

Throughout the winter season, we consistently monitor the conditions of our district’s paved roads and backroads to ensure the safety of students at bus stops as well as students and staff driving to school. We are in communication with the road commission as well as our surrounding districts. Certainly, decisions based solely on a prediction are more difficult to make, thus subject to scrutiny. Therefore, we make the best decision with the information that we have available.

We recognize that this decision may not always fit with individual circumstances. Therefore, we support parents/guardians making the best decision for their family.

Our goal is to make a weather-related school closing decision no later than 5:45 am the morning of inclement weather. In some unique circumstances, we may make a decision earlier or even the evening prior.
All inclement weather school closing announcements are done by phone and email via SchoolMessenger and placed on the district website and district social media site. We also contact the following media outlets:

- ABC 12
- NBC 25
- Fox 66
- CW 46
- Fox 2
- Local 4
- ABC 7
- WWJ AM 950 and WJR AM 760

I’m proud to report #BronchoPride is never more apparent than during our snow days. Providing a culture of kindness, compassion and respect every day is an important part of being a Broncho, and that continues even when school is cancelled.

Our Snow Day Challenges on Facebook allows us to recognize students and staff who demonstrate #BronchoPride during snow days. The Broncho Facebook page is filled with photos of students keeping busy reading books, studying and enjoying outdoor physical activities. Most importantly, this keeps our students, families and staff connected when school is cancelled.

Providing our students with the best educational experience is our commitment. Having our students take part in our programs and learning environments each day is very important. Once again, thank you for your support. We will continue to keep safety the priority for our over 3,200 students and hundreds of staff that are part of the Holly Area Schools family.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Roper, Superintendent