

Anatomy of a Snow Day

I am going to share a secret with you. Teachers and administrators love snow days as much as the students do. And, it is no secret that not all parents share that love of an unscheduled day off for their children. We know how inconvenient it is for working parents to have to find child care on the morning of a snowstorm. We also realize that it can be even more inconvenient to take time from work or to leave work to bring the kids to school when classes begin two hours later than normal. The decision to close or delay school is made with two things in mind, the safety of students and staff as they travel and the proper supervision of students when they arrive at school.

The decision to close school is sometimes obvious. We serve students from eleven different school districts. Some students arrive by bus, some by car. If a snow or ice storm is going to continue all or much of the day, and it is safer to stay at home, then school is closed. If many of the districts that provide transportation for our students are closed, we will close. School may also be closed if two hours is not long enough for conditions to improve.

The two-hour delay may occur for a couple of reasons. One is that the weather is expected to improve by mid-morning, or daylight and increased time to treat roads will help make travel safer. The other is to give the opportunity for staff to shovel their driveways, scrape their cars, and travel more cautiously, arriving at school to supervise the students when the kids get here.

My wife and I do have a snow day tradition. It usually involves rising well before five a.m. to check the forecast and travel conditions. Once a decision is made, phone calls made, and the announcement posted on local media, it's time to think about

breakfast. Years ago, we noticed that when there is an impending snowstorm, grocery stores are crowded with people stocking up on milk, bread, and eggs. So, we surmised that everybody must eat French toast when it snows. For almost twenty-five years now, our snow-day breakfast has been French toast. And, then, of course, back to bed for an extra few winks.

I hope you enjoy your next snow day as much as your kids.