



Park West School Division

Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow

Date: Monday, January 15, 2024

Topic: **Bus Cancellation Today**

Today we made a later call than usual regarding bus cancellation for the division. We acknowledge that this was less than ideal. We should have made it sooner. I apologize for both the late decision as well as any undue inconvenience or concern that this may have caused staff, students, and families. I want to quickly explain our general process for making decisions regarding weather and then specifically speak to what happened this morning.

Throughout the winter, on a daily basis, we rely on input from both personal travels of our Transportation Supervisor, road reports, weather forecasts, and bus captain updates. We conduct assessments of as many roads as possible and we gather perspective from other school divisions.

This morning the Transportation Supervisor and I had several conversations starting at 6:00 am. When I spoke with the Transportation Supervisor, he had already arrived at the Division Office from Shoal Lake having checked out roads in several directions. Simultaneously, he and I were communicating with our counterparts in neighbouring divisions to get their perspective. Based on road conditions, feedback from bus captains, and the forecast, the determination was to run buses. Additionally, the windchill did not reach the -45 Celsius required for automatic bus cancellations. The two exceptions were communities impacted by power outages, first Strathclair and later Shoal Lake.

Unfortunately, once we got going, we were informed that multiple buses were not running due to cold-related mechanical issues. Additionally, other drivers started to update us on visibility conditions which was worse than we initially anticipated. We then decided to cancel all buses.

Decisions about school opening and bus closures are made considering the overall safety for students and staff. Our record for making these decisions has been extremely solid. However, we wish that our decision today had been different.

On many days through the winter, we get feedback regarding weather-related decisions. Often this feedback is mixed. Generally, a small number of people tell us that they are happy with the decision while a small number tells us that they are not. This was not the case this morning. Several people have expressed concern and your concerns are duly noted. I personally apologize for the late call on buses. We will do everything we can to avoid a similar situation in the future.

Respectfully,

Stephen David
Superintendent