ILLINI CENTRAL C.U.S.D #189

208 N. West Avenue, Mason City, IL 62664

Dr. Jennifer Durbin, Superintendent
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Mrs. Cassy Carey, Grade School Principal
Mrs. Kyra Fancher, Middle School Principal
Mrs. Annie Baugher, High School Principal
Ms. Lori Avart, Special Education Coordinator

November 25, 2025

Dear Illini Central Community:

With December just around the corner, it is a good time to review how Illini Central CUSD #189 will handle school closures and schedule changes due to weather conditions.

General Things to Consider Regarding Winter Weather and School Closure:

- As we are all well aware, winter weather can impact school attendance. With over 260 square miles, road conditions vary significantly from one side of the district to the other. The decision to cancel classes due to weather is among the most challenging we face. Our district is extremely rural, and we need to ensure that our buses can safely transport all students to and from school, as well as that our staff and students who drive to school can do so safely. The gradient change in snow/weather issues can be drastic over just a short distance.

How does a cancellation, delay, early release, or change in weather during the day impact athletic and after-school activities?

- If we cancel school for the entire day, we will make a decision on activities later in the day so we can determine the best option for everyone's safety. If we release early due to weather, we will cancel all after-school activities. Decisions may differ for school-sponsored activities/teams than for organizations that use our facilities but are not school-sponsored groups.

How do extreme cold temperatures affect school?

- Because our district is rural, extreme cold temperatures play a significant role in determining whether we can have school. The risk of students standing outside in extreme cold waiting for a bus, and the buses working properly in such conditions, are serious concerns in this type of weather. Just like snow, it's impossible to have a hard-and-fast rule for what to do because every situation is a little different, but in general, if there is a wind chill advisory, watch, or warning, we will begin considering options for school or evening events.

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How will a schedule change be communicated, and when can we expect it?

- We work in conjunction with our transportation department, area road commissioners, Illinois DOT, and other superintendents to gather as much information as possible to inform our decision.
- The district will communicate the schedule change as soon as it is made. We will communicate through our website, email, phone, text, app notification, and social media. Local media outlets will also be contacted.

What are the procedures for a delayed start?

There are times when road and temperature conditions can improve if only more time were allowed for road crews to salt and plow roads, or if the temperature rose a few degrees. A delayed start will provide the time needed for safe conditions to exist.

- A delayed start means school will start 1 1/2 hours delayed (9:30)
- Bus pickup is 1 ½ hours after the regularly scheduled pickup time.
- No morning Pre-K; afternoon Pre-K will be in session
- No LTEC transportation in the morning. Special Education routes will run on the delayed schedule
- No breakfast - a snack will be made available
- After school activities will operate normally unless announced otherwise
- High school and Middle school classes will run on an adjusted schedule.
- Grade school students will report to class and follow a regular schedule as usual.

Winter weather can change quickly, and we strive to make decisions early and with enough notice for families to plan, but that might not always be possible or as timely as everyone would like. It is difficult to judge how the weather will play out, even with the best of forecasts. We will make the best decision we can with the information we have at the time. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Jennifer Durbin at jdurbin@illinicentral.org or (217) 482-5180.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Durbin, Ed. D.