

Unity School District - Board of Education

Board Policy 723.3

Emergency School Closings

Last Revised 8/10/2021

~~The District Administrator, or an administrative-level designee in the temporary absence or unavailability of the District Administrator, shall make decisions regarding school closings, delayed starts, early releases, and any program or activity cancellations due to inclement weather or due to other health or safety concerns. Examples of other health or safety concerns include a communicable disease outbreak, a credible threat to safety, or a utility failure.~~

~~When any District school is closed under this policy for a reason other than inclement weather, the administration shall ensure that the Department of Public Instruction is promptly notified of the closing and reopening of the school(s) and of the reason(s) for the closure(s).~~

~~This policy does not address or apply to the cancellation of School Board meetings or meetings of Board committees.~~

The District Administrator, or an administrative-level designee in the temporary absence or unavailability of the District Administrator, shall make decisions regarding school closings, delayed starts, early releases, and any program or activity cancellations due to inclement weather or due to other health or safety concerns. Examples of other health or safety concerns include inclement weather, a communicable disease outbreak, a credible threat to safety, damage to a building, or a utility failure.

In certain circumstances, a decision to close school due to a health or safety concern for a full or partial day may apply only to one or more individual schools.

If any District school is closed by an order of a local health officer or by an order of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the administration shall implement the order.

When any District school is closed under this policy for a reason other than inclement weather, the administration shall ensure that the Department of Public Instruction is promptly notified of the closing and reopening of the school(s) and of the reason(s) for and length of the closure(s).

Remote/Virtual Learning During a School Closure

The District Administrator or his/her administrative-level designees may direct a full or partial day of remote/virtual learning for specific grade level(s) or for one or more District schools on any day that a school is closed under this policy, subject to the following requirements and limitations and to any more specific direction or authority that may be given by the School Board for the specific school year:

1. Prior to permitting any shift to remote/virtual instruction, the District Administrator shall determine that the affected school(s) have an adequate instructional plan established for all affected students, including planning for any necessary accommodations based on individual student need, such that the District may appropriately designate all or a material portion of the day as hours/minutes of direct student instruction.
2. For students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade, the administration shall take into consideration the reason for the emergency closing, the expected length of the emergency closing, the value of maintaining continuity of instruction via remote/virtual learning, the school's then-projected

status with regard to annual state-mandated hours of direct student instruction for the applicable grade levels, and the remaining school calendar.

The administration shall determine the daily schedule of any such full or partial days of remote/virtual learning and the number of hours/minutes that may appropriately be counted as hours of direct student instruction. Subject to the reason for the school closure and applicable safety considerations, the administration may also determine that some students with special educational needs may be permitted to receive instruction or services at the school or at an alternate site.

Make-Up Days/Hours for Students

When any District school has been closed for a full or partial day under this policy and scheduled hours/minutes of direct student instructional have been lost because school was closed and the scheduled in-person instructional time was not replaced, in whole or in part, with remote/virtual instruction, additional school days or extended hours for affected students will **not** be added to the school calendar/schedule **unless** at least one of the following applies:

1. Additional instructional time is required to meet a state or federal requirement;
2. A specific procedure or standard for making up school days or hours of direct instruction was incorporated into the school calendar/schedule that was adopted for the school year in question; or
3. Such an adjustment is otherwise directed or approved by the School Board.

Subject to the requirements of this policy, and unless otherwise directed by the Board, the administration may determine whether such make-up days or make-up hours of instruction will be conducted in person, through remote/virtual instruction, or by using a combination of both approaches.

Excused Absences for Inclement Weather

It is possible that inclement weather may affect specific portions of the District's territory more severely, or that other circumstances unique to a particular student or family may create a special safety hazard in connection with a weather event. If a student's school is not closed, but a parent, guardian, or adult student makes the determination that it would be unsafe for a student to attempt to attend school on a day that is subject to severe weather, then the parent, guardian, or adult student may contact the school. The school shall approve an excused absence for the student(s) for any reasonable request.

Before-School and After-School Activities and Programs

When any District school is closed for a full or partial day due to inclement weather:

1. For a delayed start, all before-school activities and programs at the affected schools shall be cancelled for the day. After-school and evening activities and programs will be held as scheduled unless specifically cancelled by a separate announcement.
2. For an early release, all after-school and evening activities and programs that were scheduled to take place at the affected school(s) shall normally be cancelled for the day, except that the administration shall clearly specify any exceptions in the announcement(s) of the early release (e.g., for an after-school child care program).
3. When District school buildings have been closed to students for the full day due to inclement weather, all before-school activities and programs shall be cancelled for the day. After-school and evening activities and programs shall also normally be cancelled for the day, except that any exceptions shall be approved by the District Administrator or his/her designee and expressly identified in a notice or announcement as early in the day as practicable. An exception to hold an after-school or evening event on such a day should only be made if weather conditions have substantially improved, the

administration determines that there is a strong justification for holding the event, and affected persons can reasonably be notified of the decision to hold the event.

The standards listed immediately above for inclement weather situations apply to all District-sponsored activities and programs involving students, all community education and community recreation activities or programs that are scheduled to take place at a District facility, and to all previously-approved third-party use of District facilities.

When a school building or other District facility is closed for a reason other than inclement weather, the holding of previously-scheduled activities and programs shall be addressed by the administration on a case-by-case basis. In addition, regardless of whether school was held for students on a particular day, the administration may decide to cancel any District-sponsored activity or program, or any event that is scheduled to take place at a District-controlled facility, in order to address a concern with health or safety or with the condition of specific property.

This policy does not address or apply to the cancellation of School Board meetings or meetings of Board committees.