



Dr. Tiffany Anderson, Superintendent
Montgomery County Public Schools
200 Junkin Street
Christiansburg, VA 24073
(540) 382-5104

Dear Parents,

Winter weather is once again with us. This weather presents many problems.

Montgomery County is large in area (nearly 400 square miles) and is diverse in terrain, road quality and weather patterns. Decisions to close schools, or release students early, are difficult. The first priority is to ensure the safety of our students and drivers. To assist the administration in gathering data necessary to make an informed decision, the division maintains constant contact with numerous parties. On potential school closing days, pupil transportation staff begin to monitor weather conditions the previous evening. Our ongoing preference is to make a decision as soon as possible to support parents in making necessary arrangements for their children when schools are closed. However, in many cases we are unable to gather enough information to make a decision the previous night. If that is the case, the next day key staff monitor conditions starting at 3:30 a.m. Staff members drive a number of the roads checking for a variety of conditions. In most cases, the supervisor of transportation makes a recommendation to the superintendent by 5:15 a.m. and the superintendent will post a decision by 5:30 a.m.

Early releases pose additional challenges. Predictions for precipitation, low temperatures and poor road conditions in the afternoon must be analyzed by mid-morning. In order to mobilize the bus fleet for an early release, a decision must be made by 10:30 a.m. for a two-hour early closing and by 11:30 a.m. for a one-hour early closing. It takes approximately two hours to mobilize the transportation system for an early release.

The school division has a school information line (382-5102) that gives information on school closings. If you would like to receive text messages regarding emergency closings, the school division does send notifications to schoolsout.com. It is important to note that parents are responsible for paying any fees associated with text messages through this service as it is an outside service. Information is also available on our Web site, and we have an email notification system on the Montgomery County Public Schools' home page. We encourage you to subscribe to that notification system by visiting our Web site or accessing the following link:

<http://www.mcps.org/delayclosing.html>

A listing of radio and television stations that post school closing and delay announcements is located at:

<http://www.mcps.org/admin/closings/media.html>

When it is necessary to close or delay schools, we are prepared to do so. However, whenever possible we plan to remain in session to ensure that all of our families who depend on our schools being open can send their children to school. Given school is open during the winter months, at times we may potentially have a school closing, an early release, or a late opening due to inclement weather although we will work to keep schools open whenever possible. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding during the winter months.

Sincerely,

TIFFANY C. ANDERSON, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT