

*Springboro Community Schools
1685 S. Main Street
Springboro, OH 45066
937.748.3960*

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 4, 2009

How Do We Call Off School?

By: David D. Baker, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Over and over I am asked about the mystery of calling off school. How do we make the decision, what were we thinking, and how could we blow the call so badly? If there is one thing people are most vocal about, it is when we make the wrong call as it relates to closing school. Because we are rarely able to count on the predictions of the weathermen the night before, we usually make the call in the morning. The morning starts early at 3am driving the roads and making a whole series of calls. The calls include the surrounding districts, the national weather service in Wilmington and various road crews. We try to make the decision by 5am in order to get the information out to everyone. This also has an impact on our early reporting employees in the transportation department that report starting at 5:45am. Everyone wants to know the fastest way to get the information about the closing. Simply put, "Go to the Web", our school district website (www.springboro.org) is always the place we can post it first. Every other source we have to count on someone else and it doesn't necessarily get posted quickly when they are busy.

A couple of other notes, this year we still have five days to work with, but starting next year we will only have three. I am almost sure that in the years to come, we will have no days to work with and will have to make up all of the days we miss. With that being said, I am not going to change the standard we have set for the level of safety we expect. The reduction in the number of days allowed was not done in an effort to place students and families in jeopardy, rather it was done to make sure students get all of their days of education. I also wanted to touch on the fact that I need all of the students in school when we are in session. As parents, we are faced with tough decisions when it comes to our students driving. For each of you it is a personal decision on whether or not you let your student drive. I wouldn't let my daughters drive unless the roads were perfect and even today I wish they wouldn't go to work when it is not perfect.

Two hour delays are a pain for all of us. I know as a family this is one of the most challenging calls we can make as you have to find a way to get them to the bus stop or school at a later time and in some cases work out covering your job. In the educational environment it shortens every learning period and for some of our kindergarten students they spend more time on the bus than they do in class. All of the challenges aside, if it

weren't for the two hour option we would have four to five more snow days to make up, so I appreciate your patience and help on these days.

Lastly, I wanted to share with you the great disparity of opinions on when it makes sense to call school off and when we should stay in school. In Ohio, we are always on the verge of every big storm. If the cold front drops a little, we get the snow. If it lands on top of us, we get the transitioning sleet and freezing rain. And finally if it goes north, we get just rain. I cannot tell you how many times we are all talking at 5am trying to figure out where that line will fall across our district. Everyone that has moved here from the north is shocked that we close when we do. And I always enjoy the calls from the families that move here from the south and want us to close on the first prediction of accumulating snow. Our entire team will keep working to get it right. Please let me know if you have any suggestions or feedback on my comments this week.

Thanks,
Dr. Baker