

Benson – Castleton – Fair Haven – Fair Haven Union High – Hubbardton – Orwell – West Haven

ADDISON-RUTLAND SUPERVISORY UNION

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September 11, 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Before you know it the cold weather will be here. I wanted to communicate to you that we will be making up “snow” days differently than we have in the past. We have 2 In-Service Days scheduled for March 14th and 15th. If we have 1 snow day prior to March 14th then March 14th will become a student attendance day. If we have 2 snow days prior to March 14th and 15th then both days will become student attendance days. Any subsequent days will be made up at the end of the school year in June. Hopefully we will have only a minimal number or no school closings this year.

Many people often contact me in regards to how the process unfolds for making decisions about snow or bad weather days. If you are interested in this process please read on!

The responsibility for deciding whether or not schools are closed due to weather falls on the superintendent. A great number of factors go into that decision, and wanting to make sure to “get it right” is always in the background. The scenario has occurred in my experience where a storm was guaranteed that didn't come to fruition. I've also seen weather come out of nowhere at the worst possible time – too late to make a call because buses are already running and on the roads and staff are en route to work. Foremost in every decision is the question of whether or not we can move students and staff to school safely. The timing of storms makes all the difference, and we also know that conditions can vary significantly in Fair Haven, Castleton as opposed to the roads of Orwell, Benson, Hubbardton or West Haven.

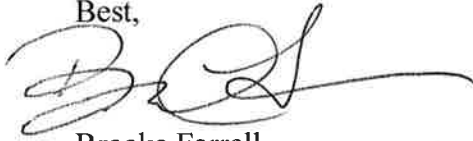
When the weather forecast is clearly formidable and that forecast holds up over time, I am able to begin necessary conversations the evening prior to the event. In a general case, I am in communication with our Director of Operations and principals, who have communication with road commissioners in each town. I also keep in contact with other area superintendents to see what they are thinking in their specific areas. If we know with certainty that weather will hit I

will make the decision to cancel the school day the night prior to keep all of our folks as safe as possible. This can't always occur, but when it is a certainty I prefer to make the call in the evening as it allows families time to make arrangements. If we're not sure, we wait until morning to make the call.

With a morning-decision scenario, I am on the phone at about 4:00-4:30 am. Usually if I make a decision to close schools, the decision happens between 5:15-5:30 am, followed by the quick logistic work necessary to get the automated phone calls out to our families and staff. On the best days those phone calls happen at 5:45-6:30 am, because nobody really wants their phone to ring before 5:30am, EVEN on a snow day...

My foremost desire is for everyone to get to school without issue, and as such I am willing to be cautious when it is called for. I'm also willing to recommend patience and delay if needed. Sometimes the calls I make are wrong, but more often they are right. Regardless, they are always made with student safety in mind.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brooke Farrell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brooke Farrell