

“Oh the weather outside is frightful...” A winter song by the name of “Let It Snow” was first recorded by Vaughn Monroe in 1945. I used to like this song until this winter hit. The story goes that this song was written in a heat wave in California. Hopefully, warmer temperatures are coming as I know many of my colleagues in the area are ready to get back to normal.

In one of my first question/answer articles as superintendent I shared a little bit about how we decide to have school or cancel based on the weather. I will repeat some and share some more information about the process.

Making weather decisions comes down to safety first for our students and staff. Many people are involved in the decision-making process: Russel Stukey (Coffey County Emergency Management Director), Wayne Blackbourn (Coffey County Engineer), and Doug Rohrer (USD 244 transportation and grounds director) are people that I collaborate with locally when we have weather issues. They know the area better than I do, and I greatly appreciate their input before I have to make a final decision. There is also a group of superintendents in the area that collaborate on the phone and via text. We try to help each other by sharing information when making the decision to have school or cancel.

When bad weather is threatening the school day I get up at 4 AM to start driving roads, checking radar, and calling the people listed above. We discuss snow vs. ice, the timing of impending weather, the condition of city/county roads, the condition of district parking lots and sidewalks, fog, and any other issues we are dealing with from “Mother Nature”.

The following are some basic guidelines that I try to follow when making final decisions. They are general rules and apply most of the time:

- Make a decision by 6 AM due to buses going out to pick up kids and food service preparations for breakfast and lunch that day.
- We only do one or two hour delays. Three hour delays are too big of a disruption to the school day.
- If possible when cancelling or doing a delay, I try to let the community know the night before. This helps parents plan for their kids ahead of time.
- If we decide to go to school, it is with the intention of going the whole day.

Some people have asked if we use chemicals to treat our sidewalks and parking lots. The answer is no. The reasons for this are that it has to be put down ahead of the impending weather, the chemicals cause concrete to deteriorate, and it is extremely expensive.

I want to thank Mark Davidson (Burlington Street Superintendent) and Wayne Blackbourn as well as their crews for everything they do for us when inclement weather occurs. We appreciate their efforts to help us get students and staff to and from school safely.

If you ever have any questions about USD 244, please contact me at your convenience. My e-mail is cmarshall@usd244ks.org and my phone number is 620-364-8478 Extension 3040.

GO CATS!

#Bton244OnTheGrow