

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Given the potential for severe weather and the very fresh memories of the tornadoes that affected so many of our neighbors last May; Tuttle Schools is committed to safety and preparedness for our students and staff. This year we have engaged our local Emergency Management Director and other agencies in developing an up to date School Safety Manual with a focus on disaster preparedness and crisis management. The District has revisited each campus tornado plan as well as transportation guidelines.

We would like to take this opportunity to respond to some of the questions that have been posed with respect to the District's plan and procedures during a bout of severe weather:

First let's answer the question about the difference in a Tornado Watch and a Tornado Warning:

- ❖ A "watch" means tornadoes are possible in your area; remain alert for approaching storms.
- ❖ A "warning" means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar.

- 1) Once students are in school, if severe weather warnings are issued, parents have the option of picking up/checking out their student and receiving an excused absence.
- 2) Any time that storm sirens begin to sound the school will not check students out, because they will be sheltering in place.
- 3) Students at each school will follow tornado safety guidelines which include sheltering in the safest areas within each school site or facility. Research shows that there are no guaranteed safe areas; however, these refuge areas have been designated as the safest location for each school.
- 4) The District will not run bus routes when there is immediate pending severe weather expected. If severe weather is unexpected and a bus is in route the bus driver will seek safety.

Please note the following information relative to the District's "Safe Schools Plan":

- 1) Each school has a crisis intervention team and written crisis plan that outlines procedures for safety concerns (i.e., intruder, severe weather, fire, atmospheric chemical release, bomb threat etc.).
- 2) Each school also has a weather radio to monitor weather conditions and alerts of tornado watches or warnings.
- 3) All schools practice safety drills for tornadoes, fires, lock down, and intruders and report on the activity of said drills to the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security (Oklahoma School Security Institute).
- 4) Each school has reviewed its site specific tornado plan with the superintendent and safe schools coordinator.

Bobby Waitman, Superintendent