



Selah School District No. 119

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Winter Weather Operating Decisions and Selah Schools

The Selah School District would like to thank parents and patrons for their understanding during this winter season. We have been fortunate that thus far our Central Washington weather, for the most part, has cooperated. However, during this past week, snow has arrived in the Yakima Valley and local school districts have had to make early morning operating decisions.

Making the decision to either cancel school or delay its start is something Districts take very seriously. After all, the safety of students and staff is the top priority of any administrator, and every individual decision is based on a District's specific conditions in its local area.

In Selah, many factors are considered in the school operating process, which affects approximately 3,600 students and their families. The process begins as District transportation officials and the superintendent monitor overnight weather patterns. Then, if winter conditions persist, the decision to delay or cancel school transitions to the early hours of the morning when road checks begin at 3:00 a.m. During this time, District officials drive Selah roads within the City and rural areas. Factors considered as roads are assessed include the current temperature and forecasted conditions, road visibility, snow build-up and ice accumulations. Also, while road checks are being performed the District's maintenance and custodial crews are working early to prepare campuses for operation. During this time staff removes snow from student drop-off and loading zone areas, clears parking lots, shovels walkways and administers ice melt and sand where necessary. Further, communication is made with City and County officials about the status of plowing and the sanding of roads in our area. Additionally, other factors considered by District officials include the fact that there are many students who do not have anyone at home during the day and would be left alone unattended. Also, other students depend on the two meals the District provides daily. In addition, Selah's bus drivers are trained to drive in the snow and have the use of specialized equipment and iron chains in order to maneuver the road's conditions. Further, the District has provided additional busses to pick up students who may be walking or need a ride to school. This would include teenagers who do not want to drive.

On these winter mornings, which thankfully have been limited, the District takes the decision of school operation seriously and knows that not everyone will always agree with what has been determined. However, understanding and supporting each other during these situations has always been a strength of the Selah community.

Again, the Selah School District thanks parents and patrons for their understanding during this winter season. Throughout the entire school year, the commitment to the safety of students and staff remains the primary priority of District officials and every decision is administered accordingly.

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