



SNOW DAYS

Each year, when a snow day is called, there is confusion and consternation, either because it was called too late or not called at all. Here is background on how snow day closure decisions are made.

If the storm occurs during the night, our grounds crew is up by 2 a.m. watching conditions and weather. If the roads are bad, the grounds crew may come in as early as midnight and work through the night to try to stay ahead of the snow. We are responsible for our parking lots and access to building entrances; the City does the streets and sidewalks.

Once plowing begins by our grounds crew, we check in with them throughout the night, and also with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to see how the City is doing with keeping the roads clear. As many of our students walk to school, we have to consider the road conditions, whether the sidewalks are cleared, roads are passable, and whether CCTA is running, along with the conditions of our parking lots. Unlike rural districts, where transportation is provided on rural roads that may not be plowed, we tend to stay open unless ice is involved or roads and sidewalks cannot be plowed. Our Facilities Director, DPW, and the Superintendent consult on the decision when it is weather-generated. We focus our decisions primarily on the needs of the students and families of Burlington and whether they can access the schools, as for many of our students, school means food and warmth.

Timing is a big part of the equation. We have canceled due to snow turning into freezing rain after dawn and we were unable to salt fast enough. If this happens late in the process, we may call school off too late for the automated calls to reach all students and staff. We cannot control this timing - Mother Nature does that. Obviously, in the best of situations, we prefer to know early and to start the notification process then, if at all possible.

We call cancellations into local TV and radio stations; thus, you may be able to hear about Burlington Schools being closed before you get your automated phone call. Be aware that when a big storm occurs, such as the Valentine's Day storm several years ago, the broadcast network gets so many calls that there may be a delay before the names get posted on the screen. Be sure your child's school has the most up to date phone numbers for you on file for use with our automated telephone system, Connect 5.

We are interested in hearing your feedback on our process. Please email superintendent@bsdvt.org with suggestions or comments.