



LNSU School Closings Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) November 6, 2019

Who makes the final decision to close LNSU schools?

The Superintendent makes the decision to cancel school for weather/road condition reasons.

What factors are considered before closing school?

The following actions are designed to gather the all-relevant information related to the safe transportation of students:

- Review multiple weather websites:
 - Weathering Heights - Roger Hill's local forecasts
 - Weather Channel forecast
 - WeatherBug forecast
- Hold phone conversations with road crew members from each town: Belvidere, Cambridge, Eden, Johnson, Hyde Park, and Waterville. The purpose of these calls is to learn the current conditions on the main and back roads in each town, as well as the timing of when the road crews think they will have the roads passable
- Hold phone conversations with the superintendents of our neighboring school systems
- Call the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department to hear their reports of road conditions
- Talk with the bus coordinator for Lamoille Valley Transportation

When do we have a two-hour delay instead of closing school?

There are several times when a two-hour delay is appropriate:

- When the storm has ended and the road crews report that they need extra time to finish plowing
- When the forecast calls for significant warming; meaning ice on the roads will melt by later in the morning

In general, if the storm is still going on in the morning, a two-hour delay is not likely to be called.

Who makes the decision to close school early and cancel afterschool activities?

The principal of each building is in charge of making decisions to end the school day early or cancel afterschool activities. Our principals use the same type of criteria around student safety when making these decisions.

Why are we experiencing more weather-related closures than in the past?

There are several factors contributing to an increase in the number of school closures over the past few years:

- Climate change is causing our state to experience more mixed precipitation with temperatures hovering right around the freezing point during weather events. This wet, slushy snow can quickly turn to ice, making travel considerably more dangerous.
- If there is a question about whether students could be harmed, we will err on the side of safety and close school.
- It is not just our buses that we need to consider, in many cases, other cars lose control and hit school buses which cause accidents.

Why do we experience more closures than some of our neighboring districts?

Lamoille North Supervisory Union is a large district that includes six towns. Unlike some other school districts, the majority of our students do not live in densely populated urban areas or even in village centers. Most of our students are spread out across a wide geographic area, which includes many dirt roads and lots of hills. It is simply harder to navigate large school buses on winding back roads than on main streets, leading to more days where we feel it is not safe to transport students.

Why do schools in all towns close, instead of just closing school in the town(s) with the worst road conditions on a given day?

LNSU students attend grades pre-school through six in five different elementary schools in six different towns (Waterville Elementary pre-school is located in Belvidere). There are times when the weather and road conditions might be significantly worse in some of those towns than others. However, students from all six LNSU towns attend the same school (Lamoille Union Middle/High School) for grades 7-12. If road conditions in one town cause us to close a school, we would not be able to send students from that town to Lamoille. Additionally, the Agency of Education requires that we have a certain percentage of students in attendance in order for a school day to be counted towards the mandatory 175 days.