

Manhattan School District 114

"Where We Succeed Together"

DISTRICT OFFICE

HOWARD A. BUTTERS
Superintendent
25440 S. Gougar Road
Manhattan, IL 60442-0086
815/478-6093
815/478-7660 Fax

TODD A. GIERMAN
Curriculum Director/Special
Education Coordinator
15606 W. Smith Road
Manhattan, IL 60442-0086
815/478-0191
815/478-6094 fax

WILSON CREEK

Barbara G. Hogan
Principal
25440 S. Gougar Road
Manhattan, IL 60442-0086
815/478-4527
815/478-6035 Fax

MANHATTAN JR. HIGH

Ronald V. Pacheco
Principal
15606 W. Smith Road
Manhattan, IL 60442-0086
815/478-6090
815/478-6094 fax

ANNA McDONALD SCHOOL

Ryan M. McWilliams
Principal
200 Second Street
Manhattan, IL 60442-0086
815/478-3310
815/478-4035 fax

Mission Statement.....

*The Staff, Administration
and Board of Education of
Manhattan District 114
are committed to
promoting excellence in
student achievement
and student behavior
enabling children to
become successful
life-long learners.*

December 2, 2009

Dear Parent(s):

With the winter season upon us, I want to convey to you the factors that I take into consideration when deciding whether to cancel school or not.

The ultimate consideration in calling school off is the safety of our approximate 1425 students and staff. Specific questions that I consider early in the morning while traveling throughout the district include:

- Have all the roads been plowed or are they expected to be plowed by the time our buses will be on the road?
- What are the conditions of those roads – are they snow covered and/or icy?
- Can our buses maneuver around both the village and the rural township areas with ease and safety, or are conditions such that there is a great deal of blowing/drifted snow?
- Will the children be safe at the bus stops?
- Does the weather forecast call for conditions to improve or get worse – is the snow/ice storm ending, stalled or just beginning?
- Can our staff get safely to school?

Generally, a decision to close school needs to be made by no later than 6:00 a.m. in order that facilities are shoveled and plowed, buses are prepared, staff is notified, etc.

As our principals have indicated in their newsletters, if a decision is made to close school we have several ways of communicating that decision to you. First, I will activate our Connect Ed voice/e-mail message system. If at all possible, I will activate this between 6 and 6:30 a.m. I will also record a message on our district mailbox. You can access that message by calling any one of our school phone numbers, including the phone number for the district office (815)478-0191, and pressing the number 5.

Our district participates in the Emergency Closing Center. Information can be found by listening to WJOL AM 1340, WGN Radio 720 or WBBM AM Radio 780. Television stations utilizing this service include: Channels 2,5,7,9, Fox 32 and CLTV News.

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Finally, closing information can also be found on the internet at www.EmergencyClosings.com or the Manhattan School District 114 website, www.manhattan114.org.

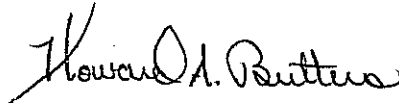
One of the more difficult decisions to make involves closing school once school is in session. If that should happen, besides activating our Connect Ed voice/e-mail message system, we will use our Emergency Hotline recognizing that our Connect Ed program will not reach parents who are at work and/or do not have e-mail access.

Our Hotline volunteers will attempt to reach you by using the youngest elementary school age child's family's emergency contact information. At Manhattan Junior High School we will only call those families that have requested a call.

Recognizing that canceling school can cause multiple problems, be assured that a decision to close school will always be made by taking several factors into account, each one focused on the safety of our students and staff.

Unfortunately, because Mother Nature can be unpredictable, situations can arise whereby at a later time one may note that perhaps the right decision was not made in closing school. If this should happen I trust that our families recognize my concern for the safety of our children. I would much rather be criticized for caring too much about the children and staff than not caring enough,

Respectfully,



Howard A. Butters
Superintendent of Schools