



School Closures Frequently Asked Questions

How are winter school closures determined?

The decision to close school is based on a number of factors. These factors include:

- Road conditions
 - Condition of roads throughout the district*
 - Visibility
- Weather conditions
 - Wind
 - Temperature
- Weather forecast
 - Short-term
 - 24 hour forecast

*Traverse City Area Public Schools covers approximately 300 square miles and a wide variety of terrain, including hills, highways, and gravel roads.

Are there other reasons that the district can cancel instructional days?*

- Severe storms
- Fires
- Epidemics
- Utility power unavailability
- Water or sewer failure
- Health conditions defined by the city, county or state health authorities
- Other conditions not within the control of school authorities

*[*State School Aid Act of 1979, MCL 388.1701.](#)*

Who makes this decision?

During the winter months “wake-up callers” take shifts to monitor the weather and determine whether or not it is necessary for the “road checkers” to go out and drive the roads at 3:00 a.m. The road checkers report conditions back to the director of transportation who consults with the assistant superintendent of finance and operations. The assistant superintendent discusses with the superintendent for a final decision.

TCAPS also works in collaboration with the Grand Traverse County Road Commission. The road commission uses technology that analyzes road temperatures and GPS as it relates to the timing of dropping sand/salt.

What time is a school closure decision made?

The district's goal is to make the decision by 5:00 a.m., if possible, and by 6:00 a.m. at the latest.

What happens if the weather gets worse after TCAPS has made the decision to keep schools open?

Weather conditions are reviewed up to 6:00 a.m., which is the latest time schools may be canceled. TCAPS reviews current conditions and incoming weather with the Grand Traverse County Road Commission and the National Weather Service up to 6:00 a.m. If the weather does not warrant school closure at 6:00 a.m., then school will be open.

Will you consider alternatives like two-hour delays?

Two-hour delays have been considered, but the district has found delays disrupt the operations of school and families to such a great extent that delays are not considered a viable option.

What other non-TCAPS schools are closed when TCAPS closes?

Other non-TCAPS schools are informed of the TCAPS decision and will make a determination for their school.

Will TCAPS close early if the weather turns bad after the start of school?

Closing schools early has been considered in the past, but the district has found that this disrupts the operations of school and families to such a great extent that closing early is not considered a viable option.

If a bus is late because of adverse weather, will parents be notified of the delay?

When individual buses are running more than 10 minutes behind, this information will be posted on the Transportation Hotline (231.933.1955).

What about extracurricular activities such as athletics, musical performances or other school functions or meetings?

When school is canceled due to weather, all elementary and middle school events are automatically canceled, including LEAP, parent-teacher conferences, PTO meetings, etc. Decisions regarding high school events will be made on a case-by-case basis. Coaches, teachers and/or advisors will communicate to impacted staff and students the status of the event.

If school is closed, does TCAPS provide child care options?

Due to the lack of staffing, TCAPS does not provide child care options on school closure days.

How are school closings communicated to the public?

The decision to close school is first communicated via the Transportation Hotline (231.933.1955). From there, a variety of steps are taken which includes updating the TCAPS website (www.tcaps.net), TCAPS

Facebook and Twitter accounts, and then to all media outlets. Media outlets report this news within minutes of TCAPS' notification. To subscribe to the district's School Closings & Alerts RSS feed, visit www.tcaps.net/alerts.

In addition to the above notifications, TCAPS parents/guardians who have a cell phone on file with the school office (listed in their student's PowerSchool database) and have opted into the district's BrightArrow rapid communications texting option will also receive a text message announcing the school closure. To learn more about the texting option and how to "opt in," visit www.tcaps.net/alerts. Texting is limited to contact numbers tied to the district's staff and student databases, therefore is not available to the general public.

How many school closures are allowed before the district has to schedule "make-up" days?

The state currently forgives six days due to conditions outside of the school district's control. See [State School Aid Act of 1979, MCL 388.1701](#).

Will school closures have to be made up?

TCAPS officials review lost time due to school closures at the beginning of April and review options to make up any necessary time and/or days..

What if I think it is too dangerous to send my child to school, but school has not been canceled?

The final decision regarding the attendance of a child on an inclement weather day is a personal decision parents must make for their family. It should be noted that the safest form of pupil transportation to and from school is on the school bus.