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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Our district staff understands that our decision to open or close schools in bad weather has a big effect on families. We also understand that our students are better served – both academically and socially – by being in school. But as always, our top priority is the safety of our students.

▪ **HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DECISION?**

Please understand that we make the decision to open or close the schools in bad weather based on a careful analysis of all relevant factors such as:

>**Information on road conditions from transportation staff and the police.**

We must give careful consideration to the most dangerous roads in the district. Even if your street looks clear, travel elsewhere in the district may be dangerous. Also, we must consider that some high school students drive to school.

>**Amount of snow and ice accumulated.**

>**Whether snow or freezing rain is continuing.**

>**Building conditions (such as whether we have electricity and heat).**

>**Parking lot conditions.** Administrators talk to maintenance and custodial staff members who are responsible for clearing and treating school parking lots and sidewalks.

>**Temperature and wind chill.** Please remember that some of our students walk to school and some must wait outside for the bus.

>**Weather predictions.** We prefer not making our decision based on weather predictions, which are not always accurate. But sometimes this is unavoidable.

>**What other school districts are doing.** We also share information with other local districts and check whether they are opening or closing.

▪ **WHO MAKES THE DECISION?**

As superintendent of schools, I am responsible for the final decision, based on the above factors and recommendations from the director of transportation, the director of building facilities, the city roads department and the police department.

▪ **WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?**

I must make the decision by 5:00 AM or earlier so we can notify radio and TV stations and post the decision on our Web site. If I wait longer to announce a closing, some parents will have already left for work, leaving their children unsupervised.

▪ **HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?**

Our first attempt to notify all will be using our phone communication system. Therefore, it is vital that you keep contact information up to date with your child's school. Check our district web site mps.millvillenj.gov for information or call 856-293-2001 for immediate school closing information. You can also follow me @drgentile_mps on Twitter.

▪ **WILL WE CLOSE SCHOOL IF CONDITIONS WORSEN?**

Keep in mind that, even if weather conditions worsen, we cannot reverse our decision in the morning without endangering our students. Once we make the decision to open the schools, many parents rely on it and leave for work. If we then send students right back home, many will return to unsupervised bus stops and empty houses. If conditions get worse during the school day, we may need to have an early dismissal, but we will give adequate notice to parents first.

Although my staff and I do our absolute best in this process, we know that often no perfect decision exists. If you do not feel as though it is safe for your child to attend school, use your best judgment on whether he or she should attend. Also, discourage teenagers from driving in bad conditions and offer them alternatives if weather conditions worsen.

We hope that this explanation helps everyone understand the process that our district staff uses to make the best possible decision for all in our district.

Sincerely,

David N. Gentile

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Superintendent
Millville Board of Education

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