



# SDCC Head Start and Early Head Start Transportation and Classroom Schedules During Bad Weather

We just want to take some time to remind you of what to expect if Garrett County Public Schools are operating on a delayed schedule or are closed. Also remember that bus times can vary from 15 minutes before or after your given pick-up and drop-off times.

Thank You and feel free to call your Family Service Worker with any questions!

<b>If Garrett County Public Schools Are...</b>	<b>Then SDCC Early/Head Start Centers are...</b>
Closed	Open with <b>NO</b> transportation being provided – parent drop-off and pick-up only
Operating on a 1-hour Delay	Open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with transportation running on a 1-hour delay
Operating on a 2-hour Delay	Open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with transportation running on a 2-hour delay
Operating on a 3-hour Delay	Open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with <b>NO</b> transportation being provided – parent drop-off and pick-up only

Schedule adjustments can be heard on the following radio stations:

- WFRB- FROSTBURG (105.3 FM)**
- WKHJ- LOCH LYNN (104.5 FM)**
- WMSG- LOCH LYNN (1050 AM)**
- WWHC- LOCH LYNN (92.3 FM)**

# Garrett County Public Schools Reminder of Winter Operations Information for 2015-2016

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Winter weather impacting school schedules will begin soon and to ensure the safety of our students, the Transportation Department of the Garrett County Public School System would like to remind parents and the community of some important information as we enter the winter phase of operations for the 2015-2016 school year.

Collectively, the school buses travel 6000 miles daily while transporting students to and from school. This does not include the daily field trips and evening activities that require school bus services. All school officials agree that students are better served by being in school however when it comes to winter weather, the priority is to keep children and staff safe in any decision to close or delay the opening of school.

## **How is the decision made to change the school system schedule due to inclement weather?**

School officials monitor weather forecasts from multiple weather sources all winter long. Monitoring on the anticipated day of the event begins many hours, sometime even days, prior to the predicted time of the event.

School officials communicate directly with staff at the National Weather Service's Pittsburgh Office to obtain vital, real-time, and personalized weather information specific to Garrett County.

The National Weather Service's Pittsburgh Office summarizes prediction challenges in Garrett County as follows:

"Garrett County experiences its fair share of winter weather due to the higher elevation of the county when compared to adjacent areas. This in combination with predominate west-northwest winds enhances snowfall amounts. When winds are northwest, moisture from Lake Erie is tapped and works with the elevation increase from southwestern PA into western MD producing additional significant accumulations. Due to snow showers extending only half or three quarters as high into the atmosphere as summer time thunderstorms, Doppler Radar can have a tough time picking up snow showers on radar. Therefore, it is common in the winter time to see nothing on radar, but moderate to heavy snow occurring. When radar does not show anything across western Maryland, meteorologists have to rely on a less sparse data source to verify what is happening. This is the

primary challenge faced by meteorologists during winter season.”

The Garrett County School System transportation department begins road condition evaluations as early as 3:00 am. Monitoring continues as conditions warrant and includes gathering input on road conditions from multiple sources and agencies throughout the county. Pavement temperatures are monitored when conditions require it.

### **What types of school day adjustments are possible?**

***Entire School District or Regional Delayed Openings:*** Delayed openings are designed to allow for conditions to improve, additional road condition evaluations, and weather updates. Delayed openings can result in 2 or 3-hour delay schedule.

***Entire School District, Regional, or Specific School Closures:*** The entire Garrett County Public School District may close or a region closure may occur specific to either the Northern Garrett or Southern Garrett Regions. In the case of a regional closure, students in the closed region will be given excused absences and do not require a note from a parent or guardian for the day their school was closed due to weather. Please note: On occasion a closure may be specific to a particular school within a region. For instance, if an elementary school closes due to adverse weather conditions, students attending the middle and high school from the elementary school’s region will not be transported by school bus. Again, students in the closed school and the middle and high school students from the elementary region will have an excused absence.

### **Can an announced weather-related adjustment to the school day change later in the morning?**

Yes, it is possible that an initially announced 2 or 3 hour delay may change to a closure as conditions warrant. As the public is well aware, weather conditions change rapidly in Garrett County and not all regions experience the same weather challenges at any given time. For these reasons, it is recommended that parents, caregivers, staff and students continue to monitor media outlets throughout the morning.

### **When must a decision be made?**

The decision to adjust the school day schedule must be made no later than

6:00 am. Adjustments to an initial delayed opening announcement may be made as weather conditions change. For instance, an initial call of a 2 or 3 hour delay may be changed to a school closure.

Early-out decisions due to adverse weather are typically made 2 hours in advance of the planned early dismissal time.

### **What do the Codes mean?**

New this school year, a series of codes will be announced to alert staff of an adjustment to their work hours. A list of the codes are available on the Transportation page of the GCPS website. The new code system has nothing to do with the students schedule for the day.

### **How are decisions communicated to the public?**

Public announcements are made immediately on local radio stations, the district website, Facebook and Twitter. School community members who have signed up for Schoolsout.com and School Messenger notifications are also alerted.

As always, we appreciate the public's understanding as we utilize available weather information and other data in a manner that will help to ensure that schedule changes are made with considerations for student safety being the top priority.