

# ASTORIA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

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402 NORTH JEFFERSON ST. ~ ASTORIA, IL 61501 ~ USA

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DON L. WILLETT, SUPERINTENDENT

Parents and Guardians:

Winter has arrived! Within the month we have had 4 snow days and 2, 2-hour delay days due to a variety of winter conditions. It appears we could have some issues within the week that may cause us to be out of session once again.

We would like to make some points about our “snow days” and ask that you read the following information.

\*Decisions on snow days are made with the understanding that student safety is the number one driver of these decisions. Local and county sources are used to give feedback on road conditions and temperatures.

\*The superintendent is in contact with several local school superintendents to gather information related to their school district weather/road conditions to gain a good understanding of what other local districts decide.

\*The local forecast and current conditions are tracked using several Internet weather sources to gather a cross section of weather possibilities.

\*There are times, due to road conditions, that our busses will not be able to make it down certain roads. While we understand this is an inconvenience, we have to be concerned about the safety of all involved related to bus pick up.

\*The wind chill temperature that we use is -20. If temperatures are at the number or colder, we will not be in session.

\*Our 2-hour delay process has established that if this delay goes into effect, it will be communicated out by 6:00pm the previous evening so that families can make arrangements. Additionally, parents are still allowed to drop students off prior to the start of the delayed day, as we will have supervisory staff in place to watch students. If the delay turns into a full snow day, busses will not run routes and parents will need to make arrangements for students to be picked up at the school.

\*In the end, it is important to note that parents ALWAYS have the final say in whether or not to send their students to school. If you choose not to send your child to school we would just ask that you call the office to let our secretaries know that your child will not be in attendance. Students will not be penalized if you elect not to send your child to school based on weather factors.

NEW THIS YEAR FOR THE 2018-19 SCHOOL YEAR

\*Schools across Illinois now have the flexibility to define what an instructional day looks like and how it is counted toward the academic calendar. This is a major change from the limitations of the previous state law where each day required 300 instructional minutes to be considered an instructional day. We are hopeful this new law continues to be utilized and the legislature does not revert back to the old rule.

\*The school district has to identify 176 student attendance days but we now have the authority to create diverse instructional practices that can count for some of those days. These days will be termed, “remote instructional days” or “remote learning days”.

\*Our building administrators are currently working with students and teachers to define remote instructional or remote learning days, which will qualify as instructional days, thus eliminating the need for snow days in the future.

\*We have started this process under the current school calendar as a pilot to work out any details that may arise so that we can fully implement this procedure with fidelity for the 2019-20 school year. We are going to operate under the assumption that families in our school district would appreciate knowing a definite end date to the school year, regardless of the number of snow days used in a given school year.

\*Moving forward this year, remote learning/instructional day principles will be utilized on snow days. Students in all grades will be prepped on expectations. They will have access on-line or via paper to academic expectations and assignments required to be completed during a remote learning/instructional day. These assignments may be graded or may not, depending on the teacher’s decision. However, students will be held accountable for the material and will have the opportunity to turn it in via email or hand it in upon their return to school.

\*Teachers will be available via email between 8:00 and 3:00 during remote learning/instructional days to answer questions that students or parents have pertaining to the assignments.

\*We realize this may create a number of questions for you. Please reach out to your principals as information is presented. As with any change in procedure, issues will arise. Please understand we will work through these issues and parent input is appreciated.

Thank you,

Don L. Willett

Superintendent