



NEW PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Parents & Staff,

Happy New Year! I hope that you've had a joyous and restful holiday season with your family and friends. As we enter the new year, and winter is upon us, I want to review some weather, school closing, and calendar information as we've had fairly warm winters over the past few years, and it has not been necessary to implement many of our procedures.

During the winter months, with challenging weather conditions, our goal is to prioritize the safety of our students and staff while minimizing disruption to our instructional program. How do we do this?

The first variable in this equation is to build "snow days" into the school calendar, which moving forward will be called "emergency days" in our new calendar format. These days can be used for any type of emergency that we could encounter as a District or within an individual school. These emergencies include, but are not limited to, the following: snow, gas leak, power outage, flooding, water main break, substantial illness among students, lightening, heat, etc. Please note that over the years, we have closed for all of these reasons throughout the school year, not just during the winter months.

The Board of Education determines the number of emergency days as they are developing the annual school calendar. In the past we have used two days, but in more recent times we have built in four days, which is why you will see 184 student days in the calendar.

Similar to last year, in the event we do not use these days throughout the year, the Board will approve "giving back" the days around the Memorial Day weekend. This decision and timing are established in our contractual agreements with staff. Please note that we will maintain one day, if we have it, so as to be prepared for any emergencies that may occur after Memorial Day weekend.

In terms of winter weather conditions, much goes into the thought process with respect to closing schools, early dismissals, and delayed openings. I want to reiterate our goal of balancing safety with our instructional program when making these decisions.

Please know that I am very mindful of everyone's commute, and will continue to work closely with our custodians, maintenance department, police department, and department of public works to ensure everyone's safety during inclement weather days. Our collaboration assists me in making final school closure decisions. Sometimes the timing of a storm, and the various locations that employees commute from can make it difficult to anticipate what may occur, but I can assure you that I am always mindful of your safety.

I want to take a moment to commend our custodians, maintenance department, police department, and department of public works as it is a pleasure to work with such a dedicated group of staff members and Borough of New Providence employees. Their commitment, loyalty, and competence always allow me to feel confident in making these decisions regarding our schools. I also want to thank Mrs. Mangel, our

Communications Coordinator, for her ongoing 24/7 commitment and availability to provide information to our school community.

If we exhaust our emergency days in a given year, we must still meet the Department of Education's 180-day requirement. Therefore, in the event we exceed our emergency days, we have a process in place to pull back days from the Winter or Spring break vacations in order to meet this requirement. In the event we exhaust these days beyond spring break, it may require us to have school on a Saturday in order to meet the requirement. Please note that vacation calendar revisions have occurred in the past, and it is a very burdensome process for families, staff, and the District to reconcile this matter.

I would like to also share that in as much as the Department of Education has the 180-day requirement for all public school districts, each district has its own school calendar, its own number of emergency days, its own maintenance and custodial staff, its own police department, and its own public works department. Some districts have busing and some do not. Some have hills or highways, and some do not. My point is that you will always see variability from district to district when it comes to these decisions. As with the prevalent modern-day heat conditions, some districts have air conditioning and some do not. Therefore, in as much as superintendents are communicating with each other behind the scenes, and at times will make similar decisions, there are circumstances locally that may influence their individual decision.

You may ask, "Why don't we just add days onto the end of the school year?" We do not add days onto the end of the year in order to maintain our scheduled dates for High School Graduation and Middle School Promotion. As you can imagine, families plan well in advance for these events, and changing these dates would be cumbersome. In addition, our staff may have plans with their families or other job responsibilities that may start after our school year ends. Changing their last work day may also be challenging for our staff.

As we have entered the winter season, please give yourself plenty of time on inclement weather days. As in the past, I will use a delayed opening as much as possible in order to provide additional time for everyone's arrival. I will close the District when enough time cannot be allotted for appropriate snow removal or when travel is much too dangerous.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work together through the winter season. I look forward to seeing you at the many upcoming events.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "David M. Miceli, Ed.D." in a cursive style.

David M. Miceli, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools