

“It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are” – e.e. cummings

Dear Armatage Families,

How could the winter weather have caught us off guard like it did? Suffice it to say, it was an interesting and challenging commute this morning for anyone traveling by motor vehicle or on foot. I hope you made it to your destination in a safe yet timely manner.

The abrupt winter weather is a good reminder that your kids need to be bundled up when heading out to the bus stop as it can get very cold waiting for the buses. The district has posted guidelines for school closures due to inclement weather (see below).

### **School Closure Considerations**

#### Safety First

Canceling school is a complicated decision that affects students, staff and families. Our schools provide students with a safe and stable place to learn. Some students rely on the school district for breakfast and lunch. Canceling school may cause some families hardships related to finding childcare. Canceling school is an exception and we do everything possible to keep schools open.

The primary criteria we consider when making a decision include:

- The safety and well-being of students and staff
- Severity of the weather (extreme cold, flooding, etc.)
- Timing of weather (overnight, weekend, etc.)
- The ability for buses and cars to travel safely

We continually monitor the forecast from the National Weather Service, and the superintendent meets with numerous administrators in order to make the best decision for students, staff and families. Staff members work throughout the evening and early morning each severe weather day to ensure that buses will run at or near schedule and that students will be safe. Transportation staff members work closely with bus vendors and Metro Transit to ensure the buses are ready for cold weather situations.

We consider closing school when:

- Wind chill is at -35°F (-37°C) or colder at 6:30 a.m.
- More than 6 inches of snow falls in 12 hours
- More than 8 inches of snow falls in 24 hours
- Heat index of at least 105°F for more than 3 hours per day for two consecutive days (buildings w/o AC)
- Heat index of more than 115°F for any period of time (buildings w/o AC)

We try to tell parents:

- By 6 p.m. the day before the cancellation, or
- By 5:30 a.m. the day of the cancellation

You'll hear from us:

- Phone calls
- Text
- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Radio
- TV

Text alerts

- Families of MPS students, you can now receive text alerts on your cell phone. With this free\* service, you will receive text messages notifying you of inclement weather, safety alerts and other important information from Minneapolis Public Schools. To subscribe, text YES to 68453.

- Your privacy is important – your information will not be sold or provided to third parties. Once you have subscribed, you can opt out from alerts at any time – just reply with STOP to any message or HELP if you need assistance.
- \*Message and/or data rates may apply

### **Construction Update**

The construction project is really beginning to take on a recognizable shape. Some of the cement floor has been poured, the roof is close to completion, plumbing has been installed and the matching of brick is underway. During the weekly construction meetings, there are now discussions taking place about the interior of the building.

This Thursday and Friday the parking lot will be closed at the north end to accommodate construction vehicles carrying cement and other materials.

The timeline continues to be an estimated completion of the fall of 2018.

### **New Technology is coming to Armatage**

The district IT Services has been able to secure funding for new-leased student devices. As a result, in the next few weeks, every classroom will get either an iPad or Chromebook cart.

### **Literacy**

This Friday, Armatage Montessori School will be one of 10 schools in the district being assessed by the Evaluation and Accountability team for the district. The purpose is to collect information to inform continuous improvement of the new literacy program. The team wants to learn about the practices teachers are implementing to help students improve student-reading goals.

All information gathered will be used as an initial needs assessment to inform continuous improvement and differentiate support to schools. No individual student or teacher will be evaluated; it will be an overall assessment of what is taking place in our school.

The following teachers were selected by the district to host our guests:

Kristen Hansen, Stacy Katzovitz, Ashely Tomechko, Denise Clare, Michele Lehmbecker, Margo Borth, Lisa Walker, Marie Vorais, Christian Houdek and Jean Avecilla.

### **Educational Benefits Form**

Our district is requesting that every MPS family complete and submit an Educational Benefits Form to their schools by the end of this week. The Educational Benefits application not only makes students eligible for school meals, they also provide funding to schools for counselors, supplies, school psychologists, associate educators and other important services. State compensatory funding are tied to each school's free/reduced meal count. Every student's application makes a difference for their school's budget. Ninety-eight percent of the funds generated flow back to the school where that student attends.

If you have not already done so, please complete an Educational Educational Benefits form and return it to Armatage Montessori School by this Friday. Either you can call the school and we will send one home or you can complete it online by going to the Armatage website.

I hope you have a wonderful week!

Sincerely,

Joan S. Franks, Principal