

GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

12 Littleville Road Huntington, MA 01050

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Superintendent's Corner

February 1, 2019

“If you don’t like the weather, just wait a moment” is generally attributed to Mark Twain and related to weather here in New England. Given the past few weeks, and predictions for the next few weeks, it seems as though Mr. Twain was correct. From snow, ice, and subzero temperatures last week to sunny, unseasonably warm weather this week; we’ve seen it all recently. Thankfully we’re into February and folks will be tapping maple trees shortly, lambs are being born, and bedding plants are already being planted. Even if you don’t follow the seasonal calendar, it’s hard to miss the lengthening amount of daylight. So no matter how we look at it, better weather is on the way even if we’ll experience a few ‘bumps’ along the way.

Whether or not to change the school day due to weather is always a difficult decision, knowing that it makes life more difficult for our parents. Changing the school day also impacts our staff, from custodians to cafeteria workers, and from aides to teachers as the schedule changes and existing plans all need to be changed. This inconsistency also impacts the rhythm of the day (or week) and many students have difficulty adjusting to these changes. I do take all of these items into consideration but the overriding factor is the safety of our students.

To date we’ve had two cancellations (one that needs to be made up and one that was a ‘blizzard bag’ day) and several delays or early releases. Although it is February, the last few years have seen some significant weather issues in both February and March, and of course we’ve even seen April events. We’ll continue to hope for the best (which may reflect slightly different hopes when comparing parents to students).

At this point, our last scheduled day of school is June 11, which could change depending on the weather. We are also planning to make up the missed January 9 half-day on Tuesday, March 19 so that we can complete the professional development needed to maintain specific certifications of our staff. This will be a standard half-day schedule. For next year, we are collaboratively working with the Teachers’ Association to move the January half-days to another time of year to avoid having to cancel school due for weather conditions that normally would only require a two-hour delay. We hope to have the 2019 - 2020 calendar approved very soon.

It’s always surprising to see how quickly time passes as we just saw the Governor’s House One Budget and yet the district’s budget hearing is now only a month away (Wednesday, March 6th). Just as a reminder, the district’s budget, at the line item detail level, can now be found on the Gateway website (under the Information tab/budget tab) or at www.ClearGov.com (search for Gateway District). This currently has much information on the district’s planned expenditures and revenue figures using the Governor’s budget, which we hope will change significantly in our favor before annual town meetings. Our hope, in conjunction with our town officials, is that this open and transparent process of developing a budget will allow for more informed discussion prior to, and at, annual town meetings.

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