

CHERRY HILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS



CHPS Weekly

District News for the week of January 23, 2015

Bad Weather and School Closings

It's that time of year when bad weather can disrupt our school days. We're often asked about the decision-making process for closing school or delaying our school start times. Here is an explanation of that process.

UPCOMING EVENTS

High School Visitation Nights

January 28

Cherry Hill West: 7 pm

February 5

We in the Cherry Hill Public Schools believe that our students are best served – both academically and socially – by being in school. As always, our top priority is the safety of our students. We also understand that when severe weather is upon us, the decision to open, close or delay the opening of school has a significant impact on families. School closing decisions are made carefully, after an analysis of all relevant factors. These factors include:

- Road conditions throughout our large district
- The amount of accumulated snow and ice and whether precipitation is expected to continue
- Building conditions (e.g., do we have electricity and heat?)
- Parking lot and sidewalk conditions
- Temperature and wind chill
- School closing decisions by other districts in the area
- Information gathered from the township's Department of Public Works, Office of Emergency Management, Camden County and weather services

After reviewing the above factors and recommendations from our facilities and transportation departments, I make the final decision about whether to close or delay the opening of school. The decision is made by 5:30 am or earlier so we can alert our staff and parents through a number of means. Typically, our “silent” communication goes out first – the announcement is posted to the District web site, Twitter and Facebook, as well as on CHPS TV. Local TV stations also are advised. Please keep in mind, however, that on a morning where multiple school districts are sending their information to the television stations at the same time, there may be a delay in when our information is visible.

We use our District Notification System to alert parents to school closings and delayed openings as well. We direct these calls, emails and texts to the primary emergency contact number, email and text message number provided by Cherry Hill parents. [The notification also goes out through our District app, which is available for download by clicking here.](#) Calls to families will not go out after 10:30 pm or before 5:45 am. If a decision is made in between those times, it will be posted on the District website, Twitter and Facebook.

[For times and procedures followed during a delayed](#)

Cherry Hill East: 7 pm

5th Grade Information Nights

Rosa (West side students & parents)

February 3, 7 pm

Rosa (East side students & parents)

February 4, 7 pm

Carusi

February 10, 7 pm

Beck

February 17, 7 pm

PARCC Primer Series, Part 2 - How It's Done

Cherry Hill West:

February 3, 7 pm

Cherry Hill East:

February 4, 7 pm

[opening, please click here.](#)

Sometimes, our community members wonder why we make the decision to cancel after school and evening activities after a full day of school, especially if roads are still “drivable” when the decision is made. If snow predicted for afternoon or evening hours materializes, our crews must be allowed time to clear all of our buildings’ parking lots in anticipation of opening the next morning. Cars parked in our lots for after-hours activities would impede this work. In this type of circumstance, cancelling after-hours activities is necessary.

Early dismissal is another consideration when bad weather strikes. Whenever possible, we try to avoid the unscheduled early dismissal of elementary students. We may dismiss high school and middle school students earlier to ensure that our buses can complete their secondary runs in time to pick up elementary students at 3:30 pm. If a winter storm arrives earlier than expected, or intensifies more quickly than anticipated, it may be necessary to dismiss elementary students early. On those rare occasions, elementary principals will activate a process for notifying parents, including the use of our district notification system.

Again, our top priority is the safety of our students. Please remember that the decision to change school schedules because of inclement weather is based on the best information available when the decision is made; however, we can never be sure how the weather will affect our area. Even meteorologists disagree on weather predictions. The final decision about whether it is safe for a child to attend school rests with each parent.

All of our district news, including the departments in our former “e-news” – Up Front, District News, School News, Upcoming Events and Community News - is available [by clicking here](#). Check our [Activities Calendar](#) on the [District web site](#) for updates about upcoming events and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for the latest District information. You'll find the 2015-2016 District Calendar [here](#). For easy access to all of the media listed above, be sure to download our free [District App](#). And visit our [YouTube channel](#) for videos from around the District.

And don't forget to [send us any news](#) about what's

happening in the district!

Wishing you a safe and enjoyable weekend,



Maureen Reusche, Ed. D.

Superintendent



Beck Middle School's Lion's Gate Tradition

For 11 years, the boys and girls basketball teams (pictured above) at Beck Middle School have made an annual visit to the Lion's Gate retirement community in Voorhees as a community service project.

This year was no exception, as the teams chose to make the visit their project for the Martin Luther King Day of Service on January 19.

The students spent time with the residents by playing bingo, bowling, dancing, completing arts and crafts projects with them. The students also performed Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

The residents are always appreciative of the visit, and the students learn

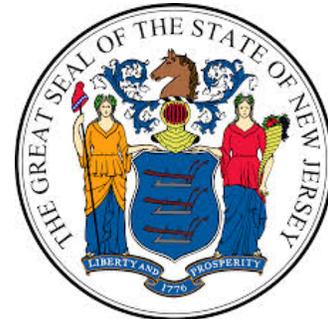


Sharp Elementary Students Learn about Caldecott Selection Process

Alia Shields, a Youth Services librarian from the Cherry Hill Public Library, came to Sharp Elementary School to present information to third grade students (pictured above) about how judges decide which children's picture book will receive a Caldecott Award.

The Caldecott Award is awarded annually to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published by an American publisher in the United States, in English, during the preceding year.

Ms. Shields spoke to the students about what the committee looks for in terms of color, mood, correlation between text and illustrations, and other elements. She brought a few



Voice Your Opinion on PARCC at Upcoming Hearing

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is holding a series of public hearings next week regarding PARCC testing.

The hearings will take place in three locations across the state. Camden County's hearing will be held Tuesday, January 27, at 10 am, in Civic Hall 105, Connector Building, Camden County College, 200 College Drive, Blackwood.

People interested in testifying must register online in advance of the hearing. Testimony also may be submitted via email or online. [You may register and learn more details about the hearings by clicking here.](#)

from their stories and insights as well.

of her book choices for the students to read, view and consider. Students then voted for their favorite book in a mock Caldecott election.

Members of the Caldecott committee will pick their choice in early February. The Sharp students then will be able to see whether they chose the same book.

The latest information on PARCC, including graduation requirements, sample test items and general information for all grade levels, is available on our [PARCC eboard on the District web site](#).

Parents may participate in our interactive PARCC Primer Series, which includes a Q&A session. Part 2 of the series, titled "How It's Done," will be offered twice in February: on February 3, at Cherry Hill High School West, 7 pm; and on February 4, at Cherry Hill High School East, 7 pm. Part 3 of the series, titled "What PARCC Means," will take place April 21 and 23.

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