

LEA Statement About Teaching and Learning on Snow Days

11/11/20

The LEA is not in favor of snow days being used for instruction. We feel that it presents a challenging situation for both students and teachers and adds an additional load on staff in a year when we are already overwhelmed and exhausted. Below is a list of factors we considered when determining our stance in this matter.

Unpredictability Leads to Suboptimal Teaching and Learning Conditions and Potential Inequity

- With the unpredictability of snow days, students and staff will not have learning and teaching environments set up in their homes for optimal teaching and learning.
- Snow days cannot be anticipated. Teachers do not bring all their materials home each night and neither do students. Items such as document cameras, teacher ipads, folders, manipulatives, writing notebooks, math journals, read aloud books, etc. would all be at school. To hold school remotely from home on a snow day is asking staff and students to teach and learn without the materials they need in order to do so effectively.
- Snow day decisions could be made early in the morning on the day of; this does not allow for adequate planning for a remote day and increases workload for staff. It would require many staff to pivot lessons designed for in-person to a remote mode, possibly with both staff and students without necessary tools to enact those plans.
- With significant snowfall comes loss of power. This is also unpredictable and would cause issues for families and teachers when trying to teach and learn from home, often with little to no advanced warning and thus limited opportunity for communication and problem-solving.
- Teaching on snow days also depends on reliable internet for both staff and families. This also cannot be counted on for all teachers and families during a snow event.
- Related to the two previous points, with families potentially not having power or adequate internet it creates inequities in who may have access to the learning on any given snow day.

Hardship on Faculty with Children

- Many staff have children at home. When we have a snow day it is likely that staff children will also be home. Our district has prided itself on allowing staff to focus on their families when needed. Staff will need to focus on their families on unexpected days off.
- Related to the above issue, asking staff to teach from home on snow days is asking them to manage their own children and teach concurrently, which is neither what is best for teaching or learning and putting teachers in a difficult position.

- Snow days occur when we have a significant storm. Staff, just as other people in the community, will need to focus on clean-up and taking care of their households.

Snow Days as a Break for All

- Staff are exhausted and overwhelmed and are working above and beyond to make the experience in Lincoln the best we can make it and we are proud of what our district has accomplished. Out of respect for the staff, we need a break too. A small gift of a snow day is a chance to recharge and breathe for a day.
- Students look forward to snow days. It is one of those long held hopes of winter that kids wake up to, see snow falling, and then get the word that it is a snow day. These unexpected days off to relax or be outside and play in the snow are a part of growing up and something children get excited about.

In summary, the LEA would recommend to the School Committee that snow days remain as they have been in the past. If a change were to be requested, it would be considered a change in working conditions and would need a full LEA vote. At this time our membership would not support this change in working conditions.