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Dear District 108 Families:

As residents of Central Illinois, we are all familiar with the severity of Mother Nature this time of year. Over the past several years we **were** fortunate to have had relatively mild winters. As we assess the weather situation on days such as those we have experienced over the past week, and what we will likely face **over the next several weeks to come**, a great deal of time and thought go into determining the feasibility of keeping our schools open. The safety of our students is the highest priority.

In the case of cold weather, the guidelines and recommendations for wind chill provided by the National Weather Service serve as our point of reference. This information can be accessed at <https://www.weather.gov/safety/cold-wind-chill-chart>. Based on the NWS guidelines, we will typically cancel school when the wind chill is confirmed to be sustained at -25 or lower. As temperatures begin to dip between -20 to -25 we begin to take into account other factors as well. Such factors could include, but are not limited to, wind speed, road conditions, precipitation, condition of school grounds, and the short term forecast. We know parents will do their best to make sure students are dressed appropriately when the wind chill drops to these frigid levels.

Although local news stations and several other modern weather forecasting outlets are used, making the decision to close schools or keep them open is not necessarily a perfect science. We always respect a parent's choice to keep their child at home if they are not comfortable with the weather situation on any given day. The absence will be excused if a parent contacts the school and makes them aware of their child's status.

It is our goal to be in school as much as possible during wintry days. The City of Pekin provides warm, modern, reliable buses for those who ride, and our schools are safe and warm inside. We understand that **cancelling school** and making a change to a regular scheduled school day affects the daily routine of thousands of families. Our schools **also** provide many services that families and students count on each day. **We provide** before and after school child care **programs that are** utilized by hundreds of working parents, breakfast which is served each morning to over 1,200 students, and lunch is typically served to an average of 2,230 students each day.

When we do cancel school, every effort will be made to provide an announcement as early as possible. If the decision is made on the day of the **cancellation**, an automated call will be sent out between 5:30 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. The information will also be promptly posted on our **social media sites** and the local new stations' bulletins. If we are able to make a decision to **close schools** the evening before the **cancellation**, we will try to do so before 10:00 p.m. and follow up with prompt communication.

Thanks for your help, patience, and understanding as we navigate our way through another Central Illinois winter.

Best Regards,
Bill Link, Ed.D.