

Madi Pohlman- No snow days for ops

By this time last year, OPS and surrounding metro school districts had already used three snow or cold days. This year, there have been none.

Despite an accumulation of three to four inches of snow across the metro area between December 12-14th, school was still in session.

Again on January 8th, 12th, and the 19th up to five inches of snow in some parts of town still did not keep schools from being open.

The slick roads create dangerous situations for children in busses, or young drivers that might not have the nicest cars.

In the past, like on February 1, 2015, just three inches of snow cancelled school across the metro.

For OPS, snow days are figured by hours in school and for the 2014-2015 school year high schools were given 12 snow days.

With the extra 20 minutes of school added onto the end of the day, one would think we have plenty of extra days to spare.

Superintendent Mark Evans calls the shots on snow days by driving around at about four in the morning and determining if the roads are safe or not.

But as Maliya Jacobsen, sophomore, said, "A lot of snow can fall between five am and seven am when people are trying to leave for school or work."

Jacobsen only had a little bit of trouble getting to school on January 19th, her bus got stuck in an intersection and though she only lives seven minutes away, it took more than 25 minutes to get to school. However, the morning went much differently for math teacher Brenna Wragge.

What is normally a 25 minute morning commute to school quickly turned into over an hour drive.

"For other jobs it's okay to be running late, but for teachers I have to be here with the kids, so I can't be late," said Wragge.

Why does our school district think that sitting in class is more important than the safety of their teachers and students?

A logical claim is that snow days interrupt the learning time for students which may result in teachers having to reteach lost content.

However, when half a class is gone because their bus or car got stuck, or they knew they'd never make it so they didn't try anyways, not much learning is happening either.

For students like Jeremiah Howard, junior, who only comes to school half days, the time spent driving to school and home came close to exceeding the time he was actually in school learning.

"I only had two classes and it took over an hour to get to school. It was basically a waste of my time to come to school that day," Howard said.

Another concern for the superintendent is that if he calls off school, and the weather turns out to be okay, the school board could become mad at him for wasting a day in school.

Though weatherman can sometimes be wrong, they have been about right, or even low on their predictions for this winter.

So whether the superintendent has brand new tires and four-wheel drive, or he truly believes that sacrificing one day to the weather gods will set student learning back, the truth is that the safety of staff and students is more important than being in school for eight more hours.