

# ELMWOOD-MURDOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Timothy D. Allemang  
7-12 Principal

January 11, 2010

Dear Parent, Student and Staff Members,

As you very well know, the inclement weather we have faced over the past 30 days has resulted in a significant loss of school time and disrupted the continuity needed for effectively educating students. Of continued concern is the fact we are just at the beginning of the winter and we have the potential for continued and greater challenges related to the weather. We can't control the weather, but we can control how we address the loss of school time and the need for continuity.

Nebraska State Law requires each school district to schedule a mandatory number of school hours and instructional units in a given school year in order to be an accredited district. Additionally, the district has a responsibility to its students to provide the educational time necessary to achieve the educational goals established by the district. To meet these two objectives, we schedule additional days into our school calendar to address the loss of school time due to inclement weather or emergencies which arise beyond our control. For 2009-2010, we built in five additional days for the purpose of addressing loss of school time due to inclement weather and other emergencies requiring the loss of school time. As of today, we have exceeded the loss of school time we had planned for when we developed the school calendar. As a result, it is necessary for us to develop a plan in order to make-up for lost school time.

At this time, we will take a variety of steps in addressing the loss of school time and planning for additional losses of school time. Additionally, we have taken steps to improve our continuity of education. The first thing we will do is cancel all scheduled staff development activities for the remainder of the 2009-2010 school year. Early dismissals had been planned for staff development activities on Monday, January 18, Monday, February 15 and Wednesday, April 14, 2010. We will have regular school days on these days and will develop a plan which will use after school time to get the staff development activities completed with staff. Due to the loss of school time we will also extend first semester through Friday, January 22, 2010. This will allow an additional week for instruction in order to meet the educational needs of our students in their first semester classes. Previously, the calendar had called for the end of first semester to be on Friday, January 15, 2010.

The 2009-2010 school calendar had called for Spring Breaks to occur on Friday, March 5 and Friday, March 12, 2010. We will no longer be taking Spring Breaks on these days and school will be in regular session on these two days. Missing school on these days will be treated as an absence from school. Finally, the school day will be lengthened 15 minutes beginning on the start of second semester on Monday, January 25, 2010. School will start 5 minutes earlier each day at each site and be dismissed 10 minutes later each day at each site.

With the late start to the 2009-2010 school year, we already are going to school through the end of May. As a result, I would like to look at ways of meeting our time requirements and educational obligations without having to extend the school year. The steps which we have taken will add the equivalent of an additional 5 days of instruction to our school year. Hopefully, this will be sufficient to meet the needs which may arise as we continue on through winter. If we would miss in excess of the additional time we have added to our schedule, we may need to look at additional steps to increase our school time.

Personally, I would hope these changes will achieve our desired goal of meeting our statutory requirements to the State of Nebraska and our educational obligation to our students. I would hope these changes will require minimal changes in your schedules. Finally, I hope these are the final changes or steps we will need to take in addressing loss of school time due to inclement weather. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding these changes.

Respectfully,

Daniel L. Novak, Superintendent  
Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools



Empowering All Students to Achieve Success

