



## *Superintendent Brief January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022*

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Greetings Ida Public Schools Community:

We have been watching the forecasts for this week's weather since last week. So far, the predictions are consistent with Tuesday night (rain), Wednesday and Thursday (snow) and Friday (residual) getting our attention. Being back in a traditional schedule, if we call an inclement weather day(s), they will be snow days. We are allowed 6 a year. We have not used any thus far. If we go beyond the 6 days, and the State allows it, we may have virtual days to avoid going longer in June. We will take one snow day at a time and see what the State will allow. As in the past with snow days, some teachers send work with their students or assign in google. Especially if there is a timely assignment(s).

Power outages are expected so please be prepared.

An interesting start to today: The weather reports and fog this morning gave us little or no warning. Our bus drivers were amazing as they are everyday! If at any time the conditions are more challenging than you are comfortable with, especially when conditions change so quickly, we trust you to make the final decision for your child and the comfort you have with the weather conditions. Our new student drivers have been careful when coming onto campus. Way to go! Your responsible driving keeps you safe and puts your parents at ease, your superintendent too 😊.

Early Saturday morning there was a 3-hour power outage. Because our heating systems are outdated, the circulating pump popped a circuit breaker causing

the internal thermometer to not work. With the outside temps, the middle school had 5 rooms with frozen and burst pipes. Mr. Bob Cherry, our facility, grounds and custodial supervisor and handyman happened to be in the building on Saturday and noticed the flooding. Because our heating systems are outdated, they do not have a monitoring system to alert us. Lucky for us, Mr. Cherry stopped in. The damage would have been much more extensive building wide.

On Sunday, Mr. Cherry and Mr. John Elkins, from facility and transportation, found the elementary with one room flooded. As of this mailing, three other rooms froze and burst today but are contained, and one room is frozen and has not yet burst.

On both days, Saturday and Sunday, Mr. Cherry, Mr. Elkins, and our custodial staff worked diligently in cleaning up the water in the rooms. Their dedication to taking care of our facilities everyday so we can keep school open is appreciated and goes above and beyond. Mr. Cherry and Mr. Elkins also are working with Monroe Plumbing and Heating to address mechanical issues and repairs. What one pays a plumber on the weekend is not cost effective but, in this case, needed!

Mr. Cherry said we are lucky we had school today. It is the worst he has seen in his 20 years with Ida Public. If the entire facility froze and burst, the cost and school disruption would have been astronomical. The new systems in the Bond have a Direct Digital Control (DDC) to notify us of conditions like this. As I type this, Mr. Cherry is working with Monroe Plumbing and Heating to make parts for the repairs if they are not available.

Between COVID, the weather and our facility challenges, we are committed to keeping school open when safe.

Additional important pieces of information for you: Our In-depth facility study includes replacing the heating systems in all three buildings, district wide, which includes all new classrooms to accommodate the infrastructure needed for heat delivery and air exchange. This is approximately 7 million per building. If a Bond passes by the end of the year, we have enough ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) money to add air conditioning to one of the buildings. If it passes after 2022, the project will not be done in time to qualify. Air quality improvement qualifies for the use of ESSER. All 3 building heating systems proposed in the Bond include the capacity to add air

conditioning when we can finance it. The 21 million needed out of the gate on the Bond proposal for Heating Systems and the cap of 38 million the survey indicated the taxpayers preferred limit what we could afford now. The 30-year facility master plan includes all our needs in priority of when a Bond could be renewed and use of capital funds from the general budget each year. It also includes traffic flow options over the course of those years. All take dollars. Senator Zorn is working with us to try to find financial assistance for some of the considerations to improve traffic flow. MDOT has also made recommendations that would impact Lewis Avenue.

Our current facility challenges this weekend make it clear that the In-Depth Facility Study and our priorities are accurate. It also lets us know we are on borrowed time with our heating systems.

Stay tuned,

Sandy