Synopsis of our last school closure:

1. Flash Alert is the first and primary method that we use to communicate school changes. On a morning when the weather is potentially a safety issue, we typically have the district divided into 3 regions. Each region is driven by 3 different people. The goal is to have the information necessary to share with me by 5am so we can make a call to proceed as usual, modify/delay, or close. If there is a change then I enter the adjustments in the district-specific Flash Alert database and it is immediately dispersed to all of the major media outlets and can be viewed on tv or the channel's website shortly thereafter. As for the Monday school closure, I had the information posted at 4:15 am and I was able to view it on tv minutes later. This method of communication will always be our primary method of communicating school closures or schedule changes.

2. A secondary method of communication that we attempted to take advantage of this year was to have employees and the public sign up with Flash Alert individually. The thought being that when I hit the send button, individuals would receive the exact message in real time that is going out to the media. This is a good thought in theory but it has not worked well in practice. Many people are reporting that the email messages are not reaching their inbox and upon closer inspection they find the message in their clutter or junk mail folders. I am frustrated by this and frankly don't get it, on Friday the generated email went to my regular inbox and to my junk mail. I am told that if you drag the email from your junk or clutter to your inbox that any future emails from the same source will go to your inbox instead of the junk or clutter folders.

3. We have also incorporated robo calls into the messaging about school schedule changes or closures. The reason we started to use robo calls as there are instances that I am not able to be as timely in making those decisions as I would hope. Subsequently, information is communicated later than we would prefer and in order to not cause people problems we have implemented robo calls. We have not cancelled a day of school with just a robo call that I can ever remember and I don't remember canceling school due to snow for the last 4 or 5 years. A good example of why we do not use this as our main method of communication happened on Monday morning. Charlie and I talked at 4:05 am and it was an easy decision. Schools were closed and a posting was made at 4:15 am. By 4:16 am I had an email notifying me that the posting been made. At roughly the same time, an attempt was made to make a robo call and there was nothing at that time that indicated an error. We later discovered that the settings had been changed by simply clicking a box. Clicking the box again could not fix the problem as there needed to be a code authorization to make the entire link work. Even if the robo call would have worked, it would have only gone to district staff connected to currently enrolled students; the robo call would have missed staff that are not connected to currently enrolled students.