



Coventry Public Schools
Superintendent of Schools - Memorandum

To: All Staff
From: Dr. Paul Smotas, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Date: November 7, 2011
Re: Coventry Public Schools Update

Welcome back staff and students!! I know last week was extremely difficult for all of you who experienced a loss of power, heat, food and other basic necessities. Storm Alfred was unprecedented in its damage both physically and psychologically. It was also tragic for the eight people who died and the hundreds of others who suffered carbon monoxide poisoning throughout Connecticut.

The purpose of this update is to summarize what effects the storm has had on us as a school district and what our options are for the future. The following list is not set in stone nor is it complete in terms of options.

- The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was opened on Sunday, October 30 and continued through November 6. The center was manned by members of the Town of Coventry first responders (police, fire) as well as the Town Manager, myself, and the CL&P liaison.
- We opened Coventry High School as a shelter for showers and charging of electrical equipment. Water and Meals-Ready-to-Eat (MREs) were provided to residents at no charge outside the EOC.
- We participated in webcasts with Governor Malloy and his staff. I was in contact with area Superintendents of Schools to discuss regional decisions about opening or closing schools.
- Food was moved from the G. H. Robertson School and the Coventry Grammar School to Coventry High School in case we needed to be open as a 24-hour per day shelter. Mansfield opened a regional shelter so we did not have to open 24 hours per day.
- On Wednesday, November 2 it became apparent that over 50% of the homes in Coventry would not have power restored by Friday. I cancelled school for the rest of the week. Even if we could have gotten that number to a more reasonable level, I was not confident that our staff who lived in surrounding communities could safely get to work in Coventry.
- On Saturday, November 5 the Town and Board of Education co-sponsored a spaghetti dinner for town residents. The response was overwhelmingly positive from those who were able to enjoy a hot meal in a warm room.
- Water tests were done at all school locations that lost power. Those tests came back negative, thus all of our water is safe for consumption.
- Five days of school were lost. There are many options for make up days, including future professional development days; Saturdays; December break; April break; adding days in June; shortening the school year (either by State mandate or local contract); etc. etc. No decisions will be made in the near future. We have a new Board of Education being seated this Thursday and a new Superintendent of Schools beginning in January who will collaborate with you on these decisions.
- The first semester marking period has been extended.
- Local and state championship games for football, volleyball, soccer, and cross country have been rescheduled.
- The high school exam schedule for January will be revised.
- The homecoming dance at Coventry High School will be rescheduled along with other extracurricular events, which were postponed or cancelled last week.

I'm sure there are lots of other issues which I have not addressed in this update. As they surface, we will deal with them on a timely basis.

In closing, I'm extremely pleased to be back in school and that we are all safe. Hopefully we have seen the last of these unprecedented storms. Many thanks go out to all of those who provided safe and secure passage in the Town of Coventry and to those who restored our power.