



Aware

Aware is published by NOAA's National Weather Service to enhance communications between NWS and the Emergency Management Community and other government and Private Sector Partners.

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More Effective Decision Support for Schools

By [Rick Shanklin](#), WCM, NWS Paducah, KY

Responding to feedback from several school superintendents and officials, NWS Paducah, KY, decided to explore changes to its Impact-Based Decision Support (IDSS) for schools. The office is exploring the benefits of offering conference call briefings for hydrometeorological events that could result in decisions to cancel or alter the school day. The goals of the briefings are two-fold: to provide more intentional IDSS via live, interactive briefings that foster improved decision making confidence through Q&As and discussions and to increase office efficiency by providing IDSS to all interested schools in one call vs. a series of individual calls.

In mid-December, NWS Paducah announced the new IDSS methodology to school officials, which provides them improved NWS initiated coordination." assuring our contacts they would receive an even higher quality of coordination. An early January snow forecast with expected travel impacts provided the first opportunity to test the new approach. NWS Lead Forecaster Jim Packett provided the audio-visual briefing and Forecaster Christine Wielgos answered numerous questions via the join.me chat.

A total of 64 school superintendents and related decision making officials took part in the audio-visual briefing. Comments were very positive: "This is the best thing in my 25 years for this." "This is a great service for us." and "Greatly appreciate the info, it's a great help."



NWS Paducah, KY, Lead Forecaster Jim Packett (left) and Forecaster Christine Wielgos conduct NWS Paducah's first school conference call briefing January 4.

NWS to Move More Products to Mixed-Case Text

By [Mike Dion](#), NWS Digital and Graphical Support Branch. Silver Spring, MD

On January 24, 2017, the NWS transitioned more text products to a mixed-case text format and expanded 95 ASCII character set at all its Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs), including these text products:

AWIPS ID*	Product Name
FFAXXX	Areal Flood Watch
WSWXXX	Winter Weather Watches, Warnings and Advisories
NPWXXX	Non-Precipitation Weather Watches, Warnings, and Advisories
FWSXXX	Site-specific (Spot) Forecast
FWFXXX	Fire Weather Planning Forecast
RFWXXX	Fire Weather Watch / Red Flag Warning
RECXXX	Recreation Forecast
NOWXXX	Short Term Forecast
HWOXXX	Hazardous Weather Outlook
AQAXXX	Air Quality Alert Message
SPSXXX	Special Weather Statement
ZFPXXX	Zone Forecast Product
ADAXXX	Alarm/Alert Administrative Message
ADMXXX	Alert Administrative Message
AWWXXX	Airport Weather Warning
ETTXXX	Forecast Evapotranspiration Product
SMFXXX	Smoke Management Forecast
SFTXXX	Tabular State Forecast
AFMXXX	Area Forecast Matrix
PFMXXX	Point Forecast Matrix
PFWXXX	Fire Weather Point Forecast Matrices
DGTXXX	Drought Information Statement
ESFXXX	Flood Potential Outlook
SAGXXX	Snow Avalanche Guidance

Products NOT INCLUDED at this time pending mariner community coordination:

MWSXXX	Marine Weather Statement
CFWXXX	Coastal/Lakeshore/Hazard Message
MWWXXX	Marine Weather Warning
GLFXXX	Open Lake Forecast
CWFXXX	Coastal Waters Forecast
NSHXX	Nearshore Marine Forecast

* XXX is the WFO Three-Letter Identifier

Users can download a [zip file](#) or [Word file](#) with sample watch, warning and advisory products. None of the sample products were actually issued; these products are shown for sample formatting purposes only. If weather conditions prevent any WFO from making this change on January 24, 2017, the WFO will make the change on the next suitable day. NWS is also changing its Local Storm Reports to mixed case effective April 26, 2017.

Phase 1 of this rollout took effect May 11, 2016, when NWS changed the Area Forecast Discussion (AFD), local Public Information Statement (PNS) and Regional Weather Summary (RWS) products to mixed case. Phase 2, which occurred December 6, 2016, covered short duration watch, warning and advisory products.

NWS will notify partners/users of future product implementations via Service Change Notices with at least 30 days lead time.

Weather-Ready Nation Enrolls Some Junior Ambassadors

By [Geoffrey Heidelberg](#), Meteorologist Intern, NWS Northern Indiana

On December 14, meteorologists from NWS Northern Indiana helped the second grade class at York Elementary School become Weather-Ready Nation Ambassadors. The students worked in groups to complete specific weather preparedness messaging related to adverse weather in northern Indiana. Topics included floods, droughts, tornadoes, winter storms and fog.

Meteorologist Intern Geoffrey Heidelberg presented a short program on the conditions that are conducive to the five weather events. Afterwards, the students logged into the Young Meteorologist Program, a free online weather safety game, and began the adventure toward becoming certified Young Meteorologists.

Second Grade teacher Sarah Romero commented, "Thank you again for the wonderful information you've provided my class! They really enjoyed it!"

Before meeting with the students, Geoffrey and Warning Coordination meteorologist Michael Lewis spoke with Romero to discuss the Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador program. During this discussion Sarah mentioned that the students were creating a "Weather-Ready gift basket" for their school fundraiser. The basket will be auctioned off and proceeds will go toward new technology and other classroom needs. The students identified the contents of the basket based on their research. They are planning to include blankets, flashlights, high energy non-perishable snacks and a NOAA Weather Radio.



York Elementary School 2nd Grade Class, photo by Teacher Sarah Romero, York Elementary School.

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