

H1N1 and Comfort ISD

By John Chapman

Since flu season is upon us, usually through the months of October to May, this flu season has an added detriment to society—H1N1 virus. Although the flu season is practically here, Comfort ISD still has to continue to educate students. Therefore, Comfort ISD is working very closely with Center for Disease Control (CDC), Texas Department of State Health Services and Kendall/Kerr County Health Departments to monitor the flu situation. Aside from this article, a letter is being sent to every parent of the students in the district as an informational guide.

When the H1N1 virus began to cause concern last spring, there was little knowledge of the severity of the virus. Consequently, many schools were shut down due to the recommendation of the Department of State Health Services in areas that contained confirmed cases of H1N1. Presently, with research and new information, it is no longer recommended to close the public school system in order to decrease transmission. We will continue to work closely with health departments, should conditions warrant. However, that does not mean that we are not taking this strand, along with the seasonal flu, seriously and with utmost precaution. In order to prevent the spread of illness, there are several steps you can follow at school and at home to keep the virus at bay. Comfort ISD will ensure the following:

- CISD school nurses will assess and monitor all illnesses.
- Staff and students who are ill will be sent home. The ones who become sick at school will be separated from others until they are able to go home. **Staff and students are to stay home until they are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.**
- Administration will work closely with attendance clerks and nurses monitoring absenteeism rates due to illnesses and report to the proper authorities.
- Staff will be encouraged to teach proper hand washing and coughing techniques to all students.
- Administration will continue to ensure that all campuses are clean and surfaces such as door knobs, desks, restrooms, stair rails, etc. are cleaned often with approved disinfectant that kills the flu virus.
- Seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines will be encouraged for students and staff. Students and staff that are in a high-risk population (pregnant women, those with chronic illness such as diabetes and asthma, those that live in a household of a baby under 6 months of age, and people 6-24 years old) will be encouraged to receive the seasonal flu and the H1N1 vaccine. Speak to your healthcare provider about obtaining a vaccination. Vaccinations are expected in mid-October.

The symptoms to watch for include fever over 100.3 degrees or more, sore throat and cough. Many people have a runny nose, fatigue, body aches and loss of appetite. The virus is transmitted through the coughing or sneezing of people infected with the virus. In order to prevent the virus, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue away. Use your sleeve or elbow if a tissue is not available when you cough or sneeze. Wash hands at least 20 seconds as often as you can, but if there is no water available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

With preventative measures and current up-to-date knowledge, our goal is to keep students and staff healthy while maintaining our high standards of teaching. If the flu is determined to be more severe than expected, additional measures will be taken to protect the students and staff. Updates will be

given as soon as we receive them on our district website www.comfort.txed.net. The following websites provide additional information:

- www.texasflu.org
- <http://flu.gov>

In last week's Superintendent's Point of View, it was stated that 100% of administrators and teachers met the state requirement for gifted and talented. After further review, over 90% of the staff met this requirement. Please accept this apology for stating incorrect percentage.