

April 30, 2009

Dear Staff:

I am writing to update you on the outbreak of Swine Influenza A in Mexico, now in the US and worldwide. I know some of you have been receiving queries from parents and staff about the implications of the virus for schools and for the Toppenish School District.

At this point there are no confirmed cases of Swine Influenza A in Washington or in Yakima County. However, there are now some unconfirmed cases in King, Snohomish and Spokane counties. It is now clear this has the potential of developing into a serious situation.

We want to explain the preventative steps that we are taking and asking that you educate yourself with the facts about the virus. You can find accurate, current information on the virus, its symptoms, and the states' response on the WA State Department of Health Website: (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/default.htm>).

Second, we are in communication with the Yakima Health District and other medical professionals and would be following the Yakima County Pandemic Flu plans and guidelines if there were to be an identified outbreak in the county or in the district. OSPI has developed a Pandemic Flu Planning Guide for school districts that we would be enacting as well as working with the ESD Nurse Corps and our two school nurses Deborah Fielding and Ricky Ramos to develop and implement the plan.

Third, our school nurses will be monitoring school illness and related staff and students' absences closely over the next several weeks and will be communicating closely with the local health office.

Finally, we want to remind staff and students that simple preventative steps can significantly reduce the spread of infections

diseases like the Flu.

Some Simple Preventative Measures:

*Stay at home if you have symptoms of illness. See a health care provider for diagnosis if symptoms are suggestive of influenza, which include: Fever, cough, sore throat, body aches. Intestinal symptoms are rarely associated with this respiratory influenza.

*Wash hands often and thoroughly.

*Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are effective; soap and water is always best.

*Use good hygiene if you are in contact with sick people

*Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth if you are in contact with sick people.

Again, there have been unconfirmed cases of the Swine Influenza A reported in the State of Washington. We will be taking every preventative measure that we can to minimize the impact on school operations.

To further educate yourselves on this issue you can look at the OSPI website Preparing Schools for Swine Flu (<http://www.k12.wa.us/HealthServices/swineflu.aspx>). For the CDC web page, type in Center for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC also has answers to general questions at Swine Flu and You.

We will be sending out additional information as needed and advised by the County Health Board.

Thank you,

Steve Myers, Superintendent
Toppenish School District #202