

Flu Communication

To members of the District 318 learning community,

The media and local coffee shops are rife with discussions of H1N1 and the seasonal influenza outbreak that is before us. Obviously, District 318 is not immune to these flu like symptoms. Our absentee rate due to the flu has been running between 5% and 10 % in each building. The Minnesota Department of Health requires us to file a report whenever a school building's absenteeism for flu like illness exceeds 5% of that building's total enrollment on a given day. At this time, all of our buildings, with the exception of Bigfork, have found it necessary to file this report.

That said, District 318 has no immediate plans to close schools. We continue to daily monitor our absenteeism rate and would only seriously consider closing school if our absenteeism rate were to climb to a very high level. Closing of school in an attempt to curb the spread of the flu like illness would only be effective if we were to close for 5 to 10 days. The Department of Health has made no directive for schools to close at this time.

I would like to take this opportunity to reemphasize the Department of Health's message regarding hygiene:

- ✓ Hand hygiene – wash frequently
- ✓ Cover etiquette – sneeze or cough into your elbow or sleeve, not into your hands
- ✓ Stay home when sick-only returning to school after a 24 hour period of no fever without fever reducing medication.

The health of the children of District 318 is of utmost concern to us. Please assist us by keeping your child home if they are sick. The education of our children is a community affair and we need your help in this process. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at 218-327-5704 or by email at jsilko@isd318.org.

Thank you for help,

Joe Silko
District 318 Superintendent