

**LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
H1N1 Flu Virus (swine flu)**

**COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #7
Better Schools Better citizens**

**Administration Center
408 N. Central
Tolono, Illinois 61880
www.unitsevenschools.com**

September 4, 2009

Dear Unit 7 Parents and Guardians:

This summer, the federal government has been predicting a significant outbreak of the H1N1 virus (swine flu) as we return to school this fall and winter.

We want our families to know that a group of Unit 7 administrators and school nurses is already preparing for such an outbreak by planning how we will keep our schools clean and safe; and how we will respond if such an outbreak occurs.

This letter provides some key information about our plans so far. We will continue to work with and rely on guidance from local, state, and national health experts.

Our plan may change based on actual circumstances, but please be assured that **our main goal is to both ensure our students' and staff members' health and well being, and keep our children in school so that they can continue learning.**

It is very important to remember that the H1N1 virus is, simply, the flu.

Yet medical experts still do not know very much about this virus. So we as a school district are proactively doing what we can now to anticipate H1N1 related issues and be ready to address them.

Here are a few very important points for your information:

- The very best way to prevent the spread of any kind of flu is to teach children **proper hygiene and respiratory etiquette**—covering their faces when they sneeze and washing their hands with soap and water after sneezing, going to the washroom, before eating, etc.

This is always a great idea in any case, to help children stay healthy and in school. School staff will emphasize this message at school. We appreciate parents and guardians doing the same at home. Unit 7 Schools will provide appropriate **hand washing supplies**.

Hand sanitizer will be provided at both Unity East and Unity West Elementary Schools in the student cafeterias. Adults will supervise students' use of hand sanitizer in both elementary schools. We trust and expect junior high and high school students to wash their hands.

- Please **keep children home** if they are sick, especially if they have a fever of more than 100 degrees. Please have a back-up plan in place to have your child picked up if they are sick.
- The current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control is to keep children home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. Children who have the H1N1 virus do not have to stay home for seven days, as the CDC advised last spring.
- Per current CDC guidelines, **we do not intend to close schools** due to the H1N1 virus, unless so many adults get sick that we cannot safely operate a school. We may, however, dismiss students early if circumstances dictate.
- We strongly encourage children to visit the school nurse **ONLY** if they are truly sick.
- Please **do not prioritize goals like "perfect attendance"**—if your children are sick, they should be out of school.

Finally, the federal government does not expect the H1N1 flu vaccine to be ready for the general public until October or November.

We encourage families who want their children to get this vaccine to go through your own private providers.

Thank you, as always for everything you do to support your children's learning, achievement, and personal growth in the Unit 7 Schools. We will continue to keep you informed as this situation develops.

Yours for better schools,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael S. Shonk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' at the end.

Michael S. Shonk
Superintendent of Schools