

**AlertNow Message to GPS Parents and Staff from Thomas A. Forcella,  
Superintendent of Guilford Public Schools - Sent on Friday, October 23, 2009**

Based on the increasing spread of flu-like illness among students at Guilford High School, the decision has been made to close the school on Monday, October 26 and Tuesday, October 27 next week. This decision has been reached following thorough consultations with our local and state health officials, district physician, school administrators and input from the State Department of Education.

Today, Friday, October 23, 42.5% of the students at Guilford High School are absent from school. We have experienced a significant rise in the absentee rate at the high school throughout the week.

We cannot confirm how many of our students out ill have contracted the H1N1 flu. However, local health officials believe that, due to the rapid spread of symptoms and the known presence of influenza A (H1N1), the majority of these students likely have the virus.

By closing the high school on Monday and Tuesday and cancelling all activities before and after school, we can provide an uninterrupted four-day recovery period and significantly deter the transmission of the virus to additional students and staff.

During this recovery period, students and staff are strongly encouraged to avoid group gatherings, social situations, and populated public places where the spread of the virus is more likely. Adherence to the Center for Disease Control guidelines of washing hands often with soap and water and covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve cannot be overstated.

Guilford's four elementary schools and two middle schools will be open on Monday and Tuesday. The number of students absent from each of our schools is closely monitored by our Health Services Coordinator. Today's absentee rates are as follows: Adams Middle School – 5.8%; Baldwin Middle School – 6.1%; Melissa Jones Elementary School – 3.1%; Guilford Lakes Elementary School – 5%; A.W. Cox Elementary School – 10.3%; and Calvin Leete Elementary School – 10.7%. Decisions regarding upcoming events will be communicated as needed to parents and staff.

We continue to urge parents to keep children home from school if they are sick. If your child has flu symptoms including a sore throat or cough, fever, or vomiting please keep your child home from school until symptoms are gone for 24 hours.

After careful consideration we believe that closing Guilford High School on Monday and Tuesday is the sensible decision to address the situation.