



Due to the very active influenza virus season, a number of students and staff have become ill. The below information is a summary of the steps that are involved when the Superintendent is in the process of making a decision regarding school closure or to continue to operate under a normal schedule. Considerable time and thought is given to each situation before making a decision.

When deciding whether to close school due to a health related matter the following steps are taken:

- The Superintendent contacts the local Health Director to gather information about the specific issue. In this case the influenza virus.
- After discussion with the Health Director, School Nurse or other pertinent staff, and after weighing options, the decision to close school is made by the School Superintendent.
- In specific reference to the current active influenza season:
 1. As stated above, consultation with the Health Director, review of information and consultation with the School Nurse, occurred. Specifically, we discussed transmission of the virus, length of infection, precautions for the school to take (disinfecting surfaces and sharing information with staff from the Health Department (information from the CDC) about spread of the virus, and the availability of flu shots through the Health Department and the Engelhard Medical Center.
 2. Specific discussion occurred around the transmission of the virus
 - i. an individual can pass on the virus before showing symptoms and as well as when they are actually sick.
 - ii. once symptoms are developed the individual can potentially pass on the virus for up to 5 to 7 days after becoming ill
 3. Closing schools and the duration for the closure becomes complicated because we do not know when students or staff are infected and if the infected individual passes on the virus the cycle starts again and subsequently the number of days schools are closed continues to increase.
 4. The Hyde County Health Director and staff provide information to the Office of the Superintendent and the Superintendent, after a review of the information, discussions with the Health Director and appropriate school staff makes the decision whether to close school or not to close school.

- Each health issue requires different measures and when an issue comes forth that impacts numerous individuals the Superintendent contact the Health Director and other appropriate departments for guidance in understanding the long-rang impact and makes a decision based on available information

We hope that the active influenza season will soon end or at least that the number of cases will decrease. As always, everyone is strongly encouraged to take the flu shot and to take precautionary measures when feeling ill. **The schools will continue to take daily precautionary measures such as disinfecting shared devices, door handles, surfaces, bus seats and handrails.** Please feel free to contact the Superintendent if further clarification is needed or if you have additional concerns.