



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Prince George's County Public Schools • [www.pgcps.org](http://www.pgcps.org)**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **PGCPS PREPARES FOR THE FLU SEASON**

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) and the Prince George's County Health Department are prepared for the upcoming flu season. The partners have an existing emergency preparedness plan in place that outlines procedures to follow during a widespread outbreak of any disease, including the flu.

"The health of our students and employees is of the utmost importance," said Dr. William R. Hite, Jr., Superintendent of Schools. "With predictions of a widespread outbreak of the flu this year, we are taking an active role in educating students, families, and employees on recognizing symptoms and preventing the spread of the flu."

"Minimizing the potential health impact of the seasonal flu and the H1N1 pandemic influenza on the health of our children, families, and staff requires the ongoing collaborative work of the Health Department and PGCPS. Working together, we will vaccinate thousands of elementary age students," said Donald Shell, M.D., M.A., Health Officer.

Working together with local health department officials, the PGCPS Department of Health Services has developed strategies for the school system to prepare for the predicted severity of this year's flu season that include an information campaign, training for staff on flu outbreak procedures, providing appropriate hand washing and sanitizing supplies, and scheduling flu vaccinations at school sites.

The flu information campaign will focus on preventative measures, and will provide information via the school system Web site and television station, and through posters and publications sent home with students and posted in schools. Highlighted preventative measures include frequent hand washing, covering your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough, and staying home when you have flu-like symptoms.

"The school system follows recommendations from the county Health Officer when dealing with outbreaks of communicable diseases," said Karen Bates, Supervisor of Health Services. "After receiving the recommendations, the information is passed on to appropriate staff to implement the strategies at the school level."

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School nurses have been provided with tracking forms and received training on identifying and reporting flu symptoms. Custodial staff will follow cleaning procedures recommended for the specific type of flu and the severity of the outbreak.

Preventative maintenance will include frequent cleaning of high-contact areas such as doorknobs, light switches, and desktops. Custodians currently use two of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) approved products for disinfecting surfaces: Lemon-Quat Disinfectant Cleanser and Austin A-1 Ultra Disinfecting Bleach. The Maintenance Department will also be providing hand sanitizer in schools for the first time this year as an additional measure for encouraging frequent hand sanitizing.

Vaccinations for the seasonal flu using FluMist<sup>®</sup> nasal spray are expected to be available in all elementary schools in October for students ages 3 to 11. Vaccinations for the H1N1 flu are not yet available, but will be provided at select school sites this fall.

For frequent updates and more information, visit the PGCPs Web site at [www.pgcps.org](http://www.pgcps.org), or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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