

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

H1N1:

As we enter the flu season, an increase of influenza at school and at businesses all over the state is to be expected. Last year the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) and various world health organizations watched the H1N1 virus (Swine Flu) closely and have learned a lot about how it behaves. As a result, the stringent measures required in the past have been relaxed. Suspected cases are no longer reported to public health departments or sent to a lab for confirmation unless hospitalization is required, which is very rare. School closure is discouraged unless the absences reach abnormally high levels. Instead, temporarily isolating individuals who present flu-like symptoms is recommended until they can be sent home. Good hygiene continues to be emphasized. Students this fall will be asked to stay home longer when they become ill with flu like symptoms. Teachers, thank you for your plans to better communicate with students and parents about homework. This enables learning to continue before students are allowed back in our schools. The Intermediate School has made real progress with individual teacher web-site pages. This could be a big resource for parent and student communication, should our flu season be as serious as predicted.

Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC):

Earlier this month, we received the news this building project will not be done in time for an August, 2010 opening. I met yesterday with the Early Childhood Planning Committee. They want to see all-day kindergarten start up in August, and then, at mid-year, make the move to the new building. The benefits to the entire school district for all-day kindergarten are very significant. Ultimately, the Board of Education will make this decision as to when this begins; however, I will not bring this to them with my recommendation until the ES staff and administration has had the time to consider all the options.

Middle School Construction:

Phase 1 of this project is really starting to gear up. We should see a completed foundation as well as masonry and framing very soon. The goal for this building is for us to take possession of the new school in November, of 2010, and begin to move into classrooms in December, 2010. Beginning the second semester of next school year, students will be in the new building. At that time, the old academic wing will be demolished and new additional parking installed in its place.

MS/HS Link and Weightlifting/Wrestling complex:

Phase 2 of our bond construction project is the link between the two schools. This will include our new cafeteria/commons, HS administrative offices and extra stage works space just west of our current auditorium stage. Construction will begin on phase 2 this coming month. Phase 3 will be a new weight room and a new wrestling room as well as new locker rooms and an additional PE classroom. Construction will begin on phase 3 in December of this year. Both phase 3 and the ECDC are dependent on a FEMA approval of the Stevens County Mitigation Plan. This plan makes us eligible for federal dollars to construct hardened, safe rooms in these spaces. The good news is both phase 2 and phase 3 are scheduled to be completed by December, of 2010. This is the same time frame as the MS and the ECDC.

Sincerely,

Mark K. Crawford