

DAVID N. CICILLINE
Mayor

THOMAS M. BRADY
Superintendent



Providence Public School District
Office of the Superintendent
797 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903-4045
tel. 401.456.9211
fax 401.456.9252

August 25, 2009

Dear Providence Schools Families:

Welcome back to school! I am writing to let you know what Providence Schools is doing to keep our students and staff safe as school starts and we get closer to the flu season. The health and safety of our students is our top priority. We are continuing to work closely with the Providence Emergency Management Agency, the RI Department of Health and other state agencies, and are following the directives of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to guide our decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. Our goal is to keep our schools open and functioning in a normal manner during the flu season and we will remain vigilant about taking measures to prevent the spread of germs and illness.

As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. We are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in our schools by focusing on prevention through good hygiene practices and monitoring the occurrence of flu-related illnesses in schools. Students and staff who are showing signs of flu-like illness will be sent home. At this time, the CDC and RI Department of Health do not recommend closing schools to prevent the spread of illness.

We need your help to reduce the spread of germs and illness. Here are a few things you can do to help:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel, especially after coughing and sneezing.
- **Teach your children to cover their coughs and sneezes** with tissues and to cover their coughs and sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is not available.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils.
- **Learn the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit; 37.8 degrees Celsius), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Keep sick children at home.** Any child who is determined to be sick while at school will be sent home immediately. Children should be kept home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever or do not show signs of fever, without using fever-reducing medicines.
- **Stay informed.** We encourage you to call your child's school nurse or visit our Web site, www.providenceschools.org to learn more about the preventive measures that we are taking to reduce the spread of germs and illness in our schools. You may also visit www.flu.gov to learn more about the flu in our community and what the health officials are recommending to keep your family healthy.

Again, we take very seriously the health and safety of our students. Together, we can strive to maintain a safe and healthy environment for our children. We will continue to share information with you as we learn more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas M. Brady".

Thomas M. Brady
Superintendent