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Dear Parents/Guardians:

As I write this update, I am encouraged to report that our student absences are down in all of our schools with the exception of the Murphy Elementary School. At Walsh Intermediate School, student absence was down to 22%, less than yesterday. The number of students absent at the high school (10.7%), and Sliney (7.7%) were down significantly from yesterday. Tisko's numbers were down somewhat, while we did see an increase to 17.7% at Murphy.

For those students who seemed to have the "flu," their illness has been mild, and many have returned to school. At this time, staff seem to be only slightly affected.

It is important to keep in mind that although some of these absences are due to "flu-like" illnesses, it has become clear to us that there are many other reasons for students' absence from school. According to our surveillance criteria, about one-third of all present absences are classified as "flu" or "flu-like". It is quite possible that many of the absences, however, are indeed H₁N₁.

I want to thank you for your help and cooperation in reporting your child's symptoms to the school; this has helped immensely as we monitor the situation.

I plan on communicating with you on the status of the outbreak early next week, unless there is a significant change.

Sincerely,

Kathleen C. Halligan, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools