

## MARBLE FALLS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### MARBLE FALLS ISD NEWS

by

Ryder Warren, Superintendent of Schools

We are entering into our last month of school, and I must say how proud I am of our kids and our MFISD staff members. We've had a fantastic school year thus far and that directly correlates with the efforts of our students and our teachers/faculty members. I also want to thank all of our parents and caregivers, because without your support, we could not succeed.

With my article this week, I need to address a very serious issue going on right now in our school district and in the state at-large. To date, three Texas school districts have been closed because of the flu (Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD, Comal ISD, and New Braunfels ISD). The outbreak of swine flu has everyone very nervous, so I want to make sure parents, caregivers, and all stakeholders have the most current information the district is getting from our state government and education organizations. I'm going to list these issues chronologically, so everyone will see how these decisions came about:

- On Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, all school districts in the state received a letter from Mr. Robert Scott, Commissioner of Education. Mr. Scott outlined issues relating to swine flu dealing with TAKS testing, attendance, potential school closures, and online health resources.
- On that same day, I sent a district-wide email to all staff members outlining our need in MFISD to be as proactive as possible by stressing good health habits (i.e., washing hands and covering mouths while coughing).
- On Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, the University Interscholastic League, the organization that regulates all athletic and academic competitions in the state, issued a directive that all extra-curricular activities in the state have been postponed until May 11<sup>th</sup>. For us, this means our softball and baseball teams will wait until after the 11<sup>th</sup> to participate in the playoff, our track kids who have qualified for the regional track meet will be affected, and our two young ladies who have qualified for the state academic meet will have to wait on their competition.
- Also on Wednesday, I made a decision to cancel two activities that involved groups of our students. Our middle school band trip to San Antonio this Saturday and an elementary/middle school basketball trip to Lampasas have both been cancelled. The only major trip that is still on

right now is our high school choir trip to Boston. The information received from the Texas Education Agency about this trip was that there has been no prohibition of out-of-state travel. The student travel TEA and the UIL are worried about is in-state, so we are still going to let our choir kids go to Boston. We will be meeting with our choir sponsors and parents on Thursday to go over the plans for the trip and to address any concerns.

- On Wednesday as well, I had a meeting with Mr. Jeff Rowland, MFISD Maintenance Director, and we have initiated a plan to be even more aggressive with sanitizing our facilities. Classrooms and all other student areas will be wiped-down daily with antiseptic cleaner. An email from me was sent to all school employees concerning this initiative.

I think the most important advice from one parent to another is to monitor your child (or children) very closely. We are going to stress cleanliness and healthy habits at school, and we are going to watch the kids closely. If you see any signs of flu-like symptoms from your children, please get them to your doctor immediately. Our teachers and staff at the school will be doing the same – we will monitor the kids to watch for any changes in their health patterns, and if we do see any, we will contact parents and caregivers immediately. In the school business, the flu is an issue almost every day, but with this new strain, we just been to be extra careful and not panic.

I want to thank everyone again for the support our communities give our kids. If anyone has questions about the issue in the article, or questions about anything else, please do not hesitate to come by and see me. You may call and set up an appointment (693-4357) or send me an email with your questions and/or comments – [rwarren@mfisd.txed.net](mailto:rwarren@mfisd.txed.net)