



WYOMING
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MEMORANDUM NO. 2015-035

TO: School District Superintendents
School Nurse Facilitators

FROM: WDE, U.S. Department of Education

DATE: March 18, 2015

SUBJECT: Important Information from Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dear Superintendents,

Several questions from educators, students, and their families have arisen since the initial outbreak of measles in December 2014. I am writing to share with you links to valuable information and resources produced by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), as well as information, resources, and links from the Department of Education (ED) addressing related education issues. In addition to links provided in this letter, enclosed is a list of relevant resources.

As with any disease that has the potential to affect our school communities, the CDC and its public health partners will have information about the signs, symptoms, and severity of the measles, as well as the proper steps to help prevent its spread.

Additionally, since schools play a critical role in raising awareness with families and communities, there are many steps they can take including:

- printing and sending CDC information and resources home with students;
- placing the text of CDC “matte” letters, or free-for-use articles, on a district’s Web site, in e-newsletters, and in other publications;
- posting the links to CDC information on schools’ social media accounts;
- sharing CDC content on your Web site through its [Content Syndication](#) (featuring automatic updates); and

- collaborating with state and local public health authorities (PHAs) and reviewing the CDC's [vaccination Web page](#) for state-specific information on immunization policies.
- Best practices for districts and schools include developing policies and procedures in consultation with their PHAs for protecting the school community and addressing how to:
- provide information on everyday actions to prevent the spread of disease, including [effective hand washing](#) and proper [cough and sneeze etiquette](#);
- provide information on vaccines and access to the vaccines within the community;
- properly safeguard the exchange of individuals' medical information in compliance with applicable federal and state privacy laws; and
- ensure that there is not discrimination on the basis of a disability and that, when identifying and treating students and staff, individuals who are unable to receive vaccines due to a disability are not discriminated against on the basis of their disability.

Day-to-day prevention and protection against infectious disease in schools is more effective when it is part of a comprehensive school emergency operations plan (EOP). An EOP can support the school system in the event of outbreak, epidemic, or pandemic and address a variety of possible diseases—viral, bacterial, and fungal. The protective measures in an EOP include a continuum of strategies for preventing the spread of germs.

Districts and schools should consider taking steps to ensure the continuity of learning outside of the classroom for students out of school for an extended period of time. For example, printed materials or online instructional tools may help students engage in meaningful learning activities to help them remain on track with their studies.

The Department's Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) manages the [Readiness and Emergency Management of Schools \(REMS\) Technical Assistance \(TA\) Center](#), which serves as a hub to schools in providing information and resources for addressing infectious disease and supporting the whole school community. We are providing links to some of their valuable resources on this page, and you may wish to learn more about their resources on their Web site at: <http://rems.ed.gov>.

I hope this information is helpful in the work you do to ensure students' safety.

Sincerely,

Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education

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Attachment: Resources Supporting Schools, Students, Staff, and Families