

## Operational Services

### Pandemic Preparedness <sup>1</sup>

The School Board recognizes that the District will play an essential role along with the local health department and emergency management agencies in protecting the public's health and safety if an influenza pandemic occurs. <sup>2</sup> A pandemic influenza is a worldwide outbreak of a virus for which there is little or no natural immunity and no vaccine; it spreads quickly to people who have not been previously exposed to the new virus. <sup>3</sup>

To prepare the School District community for a pandemic, the Superintendent or designee shall: <sup>4</sup> (1) learn and understand the roles that the federal, State, and local government would play in an epidemic; (2) form a pandemic planning team consisting of appropriate District personnel and community members to identify priorities and oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive pandemic influenza school action plan; and (3) build awareness of the final plan among staff, students, and community.

### Emergency School Closing

In the case of a pandemic, any decision for an emergency school closing will be made by the Superintendent in consultation with and, if necessary, at the direction of the District's local health department, emergency management agencies, and Regional Office of Education. <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This policy is optional. A pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of a disease for which there is little or no natural immunity. During an influenza pandemic, a new influenza virus will cause thousands or even millions of people to contract the disease and, in turn, spread the illness to others because people have not been previously exposed to the new virus. Seasonal influenza viruses are similar to those already circulating among people. See, *School Guidance During an Influenza Pandemic, December 2006*; Illinois State Board of Education opening letter to School Officials dated November 2006 from Dr. Randy J. Dunn and Dr. Eric Whitaker. This letter may be found online at:

[www.isbe.net/regionaloffices/pdf/sppg\\_letter.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/regionaloffices/pdf/sppg_letter.pdf) or  
[www.idph.state.il.us/pandemic\\_flu/school\\_guide/sppg\\_letter.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/pandemic_flu/school_guide/sppg_letter.pdf).

According to the Centers for Disease Control guidance, schools serve as an "amplification point" of flu epidemics. *School Superintendent's Insider, April 2007*. School officials should be preparing for a flu pandemic as a U.S. Health and Human Services Pandemic Influenza Plan estimates that about 30 percent of the general population would become ill in a pandemic. The agency estimates among school aged children the figure would be higher, about 40 percent. Sources: *NSBA and School Board News 3/14/2006*.

Boards are authorized to adopt a policy on pandemic preparedness even though State and federal law provide little guidance. State law grants boards broad authority to formulate, adopt, and modify school board policies, at the board's sole discretion, subject only to mandatory collective bargaining agreements and State and federal law. 105 ILCS 5/10-20.5 and 115 ILCS 5/1 et seq. See 2:20, *Powers and Duties of the School Board* and also 2:240, *Board Policy Development*.

<sup>2</sup> Multiple stakeholders have important roles in pandemic influenza preparedness and response. Stakeholders include federal departments and agencies, public health organizations, State and local health departments and laboratories, private health care organizations, influenza vaccine and antiviral manufacturers, and vaccine distributors and vaccinators. Effective response to an influenza pandemic requires planning, infrastructure, and action at many levels and by many groups. *Illinois Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan, Version 2.05, October 10, 2006, page 38*, which is located at: [http://www.idph.state.il.us/pandemic\\_flu/planning.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/pandemic_flu/planning.htm).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual/familyguide.html>.

<sup>4</sup> 105 ILCS 5/10-16.7. The school board directs, through policy, the superintendent in his or her charge of the district's administration.

<sup>5</sup> Local health departments, emergency medical agencies and the Regional Office of Education may direct a school to close during a pandemic. See, *School Guidance During an Influenza Pandemic, December 2006*; Illinois State Board of Education opening letter to school officials dated November 2006 from Dr. Randy J. Dunn and Dr. Eric Whitaker. This letter is online at:

[www.isbe.net/regionaloffices/pdf/sppg\\_letter.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/regionaloffices/pdf/sppg_letter.pdf) or  
[www.idph.state.il.us/pandemic\\_flu/school\\_guide/sppg\\_letter.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/pandemic_flu/school_guide/sppg_letter.pdf).

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/10-16.7 and 5/10-20.5.  
115 ILCS 5/1 et seq.

CROSS REF.: 1:20 (District Organization, Operations, and Cooperative Agreements), 2:20 (Powers and Duties of the School Board), 4:170 (Safety), 7:90 (Release During School Hours), 8:100 (Relations with Other Organizations and Agencies)