

Instant Alert message 10-20-09

First, the flu season is in full swing. A letter is on its way from me describing what is happening in our schools, our reaction to the illnesses we are seeing, and what you can do as parents to help keep our children and schools as healthy as possible. Like always, teaching and reinforcing good hygiene like hand washing and covering sneezes and coughs with an elbow or tissue is one of the best things we can do at school and at home. We are also asking that parents keep sick kids home for 24 hours after their fever goes away. Information is also available on our website at [www.isd317.org](http://www.isd317.org) under the "Quick Links" tab.

Second, with the challenges of our economy changing many peoples' work situations, I want to encourage you to fill out a free or reduced lunch application even if you haven't qualified in the past. All of your personal information is kept confidential, and because we use PIN numbers in the lunchroom, your child's lunch status in the cafeteria is kept a secret. Not only can qualifying for free or reduced lunch take some of the pressure off you during some tough economic times, it helps the school district qualify for additional aid and grants, enabling us to continue to provide excellent programming on a tight budget. Applications can be accessed on our district website under the quick links tab or in the district office, and can be mailed in our dropped off in the district office.

Third, we are being overwhelmed in our elementary office with calls from parents who are asking to change their child's transportation arrangements, usually to a new drop-off location, and for some children it is a different spot almost every night. This puts children at risk, puts enormous stress on our phone system, ties up staff from doing other important work and stresses children out who don't know where they are going to be dropped off on a particular day. We need your help with three things:

- First and most important: limit the number of places where your children could be dropped off. Families should have one main drop off location and one alternate
- Second, send a note with your child rather than call. Our phone system has literally been overwhelmed in the afternoons.
- Third, discuss your child's transportation arrangements with them the night before or before they leave for school.

Finally, Boys and Girls Club is scheduled to begin programming on Monday, October 26th. Monday and Tuesdays from 3-7 are for Kindergarten through 3rd grade and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3-7 are for 4th-6th graders, with Teen Night on Fridays from 3:15-8. We are also having a Lights On kickoff and open house this Thursday, October 22nd from 4:30-7:00. Students interested in joining BGC, Parents and community members are invited to come in and check out the club. We will have pizza, snacks, juice and coffee for everyone.