



**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**
Richard P. Mills
President of The University and
Commissioner of Education



**NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**
Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner

April 27, 2009

TO: District Superintendents of Schools
Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools
Administrators of Charter Schools
Principals
Other Educators

FROM: Richard P. Mills
Commissioner
NYS Education Department

Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner
NYS Department of Health

SUBJECT: Swine Influenza (Flu)

As of this afternoon at 4:00 P.M., twenty-eight students at a private school in Queens, New York have tested positive for swine flu. Accordingly, the Governor has activated New York State's health emergency preparedness plan and put the State on high alert to quickly identify and respond to any cases of this flu.

We are writing to you, jointly, in an effort to keep you updated and to provide you with materials that you may find useful in communicating with the residents of your district. Specifically, we are including with this letter: a template of a press release that you can adapt for local use; a model letter to parents; and talking points for use by school officials. We are also giving you our commitment to continue providing you with pertinent information as we receive it.

At this point, only one school in the State has been asked to close (St. Francis Preparatory School, where the cases were discovered). This is, of course, an evolving situation and recommendations may change as more information becomes available. School officials should therefore plan ahead in the event a local health emergency is declared and schools are required to close.

If you observe an increase in absenteeism or an increase in the number of students and staff suffering with flu-like symptoms, you should follow district protocols for communicating with local health department officials. Decisions regarding possible school closures should be made in the first instance by school and district officials in consultation with the school medical director, nursing staff, and local health department officials. Because future school closures are possible you are further advised to inform district residents that they should prepare for the possibility of such closures. Again, the State Health Department and the State Education Department will continue to provide guidance that will help inform those decisions.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. We will be in touch again shortly.

Attd: Template of Press Release
Model Letter to Parents
Talking Points for NYS School Officials