



A Union of Professionals

H1N1 Checklist for Locals

Is Your Local Prepared?

For Pre-K—12 Locals with Teachers, PSRP and Early Childhood Members

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expects another wave of the novel H1N1 influenza to begin as schools open. H1N1 is the predominant flu virus spreading around the globe. The World Health Organization (WHO) is calling this outbreak a pandemic—a global influenza epidemic. So far, this pandemic appears to be mild to moderate, but we won't know until it hits us—again.

Now is the time to review your district's or institution's pandemic influenza plans (which may be part of a broader emergency preparedness/response plan). The CDC has radically changed its guidance for schools (<http://www.flu.gov/plan/school/schoolguidance.html>); it now recommends that decisions on closure be made in stages, not based on the identification of one confirmed or suspected case of H1N1. Since your district is likely to keep schools open even in the wake of high absenteeism due to flu-like illness, routine preventive practices in schools are important more than ever.

The AFT recommends that every leader who doesn't have his or her district's pandemic influenza plan request a copy as soon as possible. It's important that leaders evaluate the plan to make sure it will not jeopardize contractual protections or put members' health at risk. Below is a check list of questions to help you evaluate the pandemic plan.

In plan?	Yes	No	Pursue with district
Pandemic Influenza Planning			
Was the local formally involved in the development of the plan?			
Were enough members (proportionally, by job title) involved in the development of the plan?			
Are you confident that members are aware of the plan and understand their roles in the event of a pandemic?			

In plan?	Yes	No	Pursue with district
Are you confident that members have been informed of how decisions will be made about minimizing exposure and school and/or closures?			
Are there provisions to train staff on the plan and their roles in the event of a pandemic?			
Are there provisions for training new staff? Subs? Temps?			
Plan Content			
Does the plan identify “essential personnel” and describe their roles? If so, are any members identified as such?			
Is there any process outlined for referring students with flu-like symptoms to the school nurse for early assessment?			
Are there plans for training staff on the signs and symptoms of flu-like illnesses?			
Are there provisions to isolate students and staff with flu-like symptoms from the general school community (isolation rooms in schools)? Does the plan identify who will staff an isolation room?			
Does the plan give criteria for return to school/work after a flu-like illness?			

H1N1 Checklist for Teacher, PSRP & Early Childhood Locals —2

In plan?	Yes	No	Pursue with district
<p>Does it lay out how decisions will be made to close schools?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How the district will work with the local health department? ▪ How the union may be involved with committees, superintendent's office, board of education, etc., in the decision or communication? 			
<p>Are contingency plans described in the event the school year must be extended due to a lengthy closure? (How will members be paid, etc.?)</p>			
<p>Is there an adequate communication plan to alert or update staff, students, parents and the union about important decisions?</p>			
<p>Are there provisions for adequate supplies—tissues, paper towels, soap, hand-sanitizer—to reduce exposure?</p>			
<p>Is there training for custodial maintenance staff on appropriate cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting when needed? Does the plan address personal protective equipment (PPE) for custodial staff?</p>			
<p>Is there a plan to reduce or eliminate exposure on school buses? What protections will be available to bus drivers?</p>			

H1N1 Checklist for Teacher, PSRP & Early Childhood Locals —3

In plan?	Yes	No	Pursue with district
Is there a plan to train staff, students and parents on effective preventive methods (hand-washing, cough/sneeze etiquette)?			
Will the district supply posters and other reminders to promote good hygiene practices?			
Does the plan address special protections for high-risk populations—such as workers or students who are pregnant, have chronic respiratory conditions or have compromised immune systems?			
Does the plan describe how school influenza data will be collected at the school level and designate staff who will be responsible for collecting the data?			
Does the plan describe how school influenza illness data will be shared with the district (i.e., methods for counting and reporting absenteeism)?			
Is there a respiratory protection program for school nurses or other staff who come into contact with symptomatic persons? Are N95 respirators provided?			
Contract Considerations			
Is there a provision to consult with the union in the event of closing or on decisions to reopen a school?			

H1N1 Checklist for Teacher, PSRP & Early Childhood Locals —4

In plan?	Yes	No	Pursue with district
Does the plan encourage staff to stay at home when sick and address incentives to come to work?			
Does the plan suspend a requirement for a doctor's letter to return after a long illness? (A letter might be difficult to get if health departments recommend avoiding doctors' offices/ emergency rooms if you are sick.)			
<p>In the event schools are closed for any period, does the plan describe work expectations for staff?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will teachers be expected to provide distance learning? ▪ Will any staff be required to come to school (e.g., custodial, secretarial or classroom staff)? 			
<p>Does the plan address maintenance of pay and benefits for your members in the event of a lengthy closure? For:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers? ▪ Paraprofessionals and school-related personnel? 			
Does the plan include provisions for wages and benefits in the event the school year is extended due to closure associated with the pandemic?			
Will the district provide seasonal and H1N1 vaccinations at no cost to staff?			

H1N1 Checklist for Teacher, PSRP & Early Childhood Locals —5

There is a great deal of uncertainty about the course and severity of the pandemic. The pandemic will not strike every community. Experts cannot predict which communities will be hard-hit or those that will have little or no H1N1. For that reason, we all must be prepared.

The AFT will be preparing and constantly updating fact sheets to assist our leaders and members as they navigate the new influenza season. These fact sheets will be available on LeaderNet and the AFT public Web site (www.aft.org/topics/h1n1). We recommend that you check frequently for updates on the H1N1 pandemic. You can expect guidance documents for:

- School nurses,
- Custodial maintenance staff,
- School bus drivers, and
- All members (tips for self-care).

We also will be relying on you to inform us of what is happening in your district. Your experiences may be invaluable in assisting other AFT leaders. We look forward to collaborating with you this new influenza season.

Call the AFT health and safety program with your questions and concerns. We can be reached at 800/238-1133, ext. 5677, 5674 and 4365.

For more information on H1N1 Influenza, visit
www.aft.org/topics/h1n1



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American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
202/879-4400
www.aft.org