



Blaine County School District #61

118 West Bullion Street – Hailey, Idaho 83333

www.blaineschools.org

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October 17, 2014

Dear Staff, Parents, Students and Community Members,

The health and safety of our students and staff are always our top priority in the Blaine County School District. One of the things I have learned in my Listening Tour is that we have a deeply caring community and that our staff takes great pride in taking care of each other. Our approach has been and will continue to be that we treat everyone in the Blaine County School District like family. When issues of concern are brought to our attention, we feel it is important to share them with you.

We are aware of at least one family in our school system who recently returned from East Africa. Their trip was not in West Africa (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea). We are following the current recommended Center for Disease Control (CDC) [protocol](#) as they return; they did not travel to West Africa and we do not believe they were in direct contact with someone who has Ebola. According to current CDC guidelines, the level of threat is extremely low. We will make every effort to maintain their privacy and we hope you join us in creating a safe and welcoming community for all of our families, regardless of their travel outside of the area. We will continue to monitor all of our children's health and as always, intervene at the first sign of illness.

While news of Ebola dominates the media, there are more immediate health concerns you should be aware of: enterovirus and flu. Almost all of the CDC-confirmed cases this year of EV-D68 infection have been among children. Many of the children had asthma or a history of wheezing.

As enterovirus season tapers off, flu activity typically increases in October. While there is not a vaccine to prevent illness from enteroviruses, the single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year. Many resources for parents and others can be found on the [CDC flu website](#). CDC recommends **ALL** children 6 months old or older get a flu vaccine. We encourage our staff and parents to get a flu vaccine as well. It is critical to reduce the number of people with the flu in order to allow our local health care workers to focus limited resources on more urgent cases. It is also important for everyone, adults and children alike, to maintain proper hand hygiene.

Finally, we know our community may also have questions about what schools can do to keep students and adults safe from the Ebola virus. According to the current information from the

CDC, it is important to know individuals are not contagious until symptoms appear. Symptoms include a fever of greater than 101.4 Fahrenheit, and additional symptoms such as severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or unexplained hemorrhage.

Local emergency management, elected officials, St. Luke's Hospital and the Department of Health will continue to keep the school district and our community informed in determining the best way to protect people in our region.

If you need resources for yourself, your students, or your children regarding anxiety, please refer to [Recognizing and Reducing Signs of Anxiety in Times of Crisis](#).

Please do not hesitate to [contact me](#) directly with any of your concerns. By keeping open lines of communication we can help each other stay informed and be proactive when it comes to our health.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "GwenCarol Holmes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

GwenCarol Holmes, Ed.D.
Superintendent

[Por favor, lea la carta en español](#)