

Eau Claire Public Schools

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT



6190 West Main Street~ Eau Claire, Michigan 49111
Phone: 269. 461.6947 Superintendent: Ann Marie Shell

September 20, 2019

Dear Friends and Families of Eau Claire Public Schools,

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding as the District continues to ensure that the safety and protection of our students, staff and community members remain our first priority.

Berrien County Health Department released a statement on Wednesday, September 18th and it may come as a surprise, but they do not recommend that schools cancel evening events, such as sporting events or practices, or limit daytime outdoor activities like recess. However, the Health Department does recommend the following actions be taken:

- Encourage the use of an EPA-registered insect repellent for teams/groups that practice or perform outdoors in the late afternoon/evening.
- Consider avoiding field trips to heavily wooded or swampy areas to reduce potential exposure to mosquitos.
- Perform walk-throughs of your properties to remove any standing water to reduce potential mosquito breeding ground sites.
- Consider contacting a local pest control company regarding concentrated mosquito spraying options in areas of concern.

The Health Department also encourages families to take the following personal protective actions to prevent mosquito bites:

- It is up to parents to decide whether a child should participate in outdoor events and activities.
- When outdoors, apply insect repellents that contain the active ingredient DEET, or other EPA-registered product to exposed skin or clothing, and always follow the manufacturer's directions for use.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors. Apply insect repellent to clothing to help prevent bites.
- Maintain window and door screening to help keep mosquitoes outside.
- Empty water from mosquito breeding sites around the home, such as buckets, unused kiddie pools, old tires or similar sites where mosquitoes may lay eggs.
- Use nets and/or fans over outdoor eating areas.

Eau Claire Public Schools will be taking the following precautions:

1. ***NOTICE OF A POSSIBLE PESTICIDE APPLICATION***: The District is considering the application of a concentrated insecticide as an additional preventative measure. According to MCL 324.8316(5): *Schools may only apply pesticide with less than 48 hours' prior notice in emergency circumstances.* However, due to the sense of urgency and seriousness of this matter, the District considers the fact that two Eau Claire residents have confirmed cases of EEE, that this is an emergency situation. Additionally, our District attorney (Thrun Law Firm, P.C.) released a statement yesterday that said: *"We believe MDHHS's communication about EEE constitutes an emergency allowing pesticide application on school grounds without the normally required 48-hour notification."* *Should we make the decision to move forward with a pesticide application we will provide notice promptly after the application, if not before.*
2. Beginning next week, September 23rd, the District (with caution) will go back to our regularly scheduled outdoor activities. Insect repellent will be provided for all students/teams/groups that are involved in outside activities. Students will be encouraged to apply the repellent and parents and guardians should advise students on whether or not use school-provided insect repellent. ***However, school officials have been advised to not administer it to students.***
3. The District is currently reviewing and monitoring all evening activities that occur after dusk. ***Please note, TONIGHTS home football game has been moved to 5:00 pm.*** All other postponements, cancelations or rescheduling of events in order to limit potential exposure for students, staff and community members will be communicated through School Messenger and our Social Media platforms.
4. Our maintenance department staff will continue to perform district walk-throughs to remove any standing water and will continue to do so on a daily basis until the area receives its first hard frost.

Finally, It is important to remember that while serious, the risk of contracting EEE is very low. More information regarding EEE can be found at www.bchdmi.org or www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases.

We will continue working with the Berrien County Department of Health and Human Services and with area Superintendents from across Berrien RESA, to build a safety plan that is sustainable for the duration of this outbreak.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Ann Marie Shell
Superintendent
Eau Claire Public Schools



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