



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools



H1N1: Lessons Learned

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Demographic Information:

- **SCUCISD is a fast-growth suburban San Antonio school district that encompasses five cities and portions of both Guadalupe and Bexar Counties.**
- **Growth rates have averaged 10% per year for the past 10 years.**
- **We are expecting 12,000 students in the fall, with 15 separate campuses and two comprehensive high schools.**
- **Overall, 30% of the students in the District are military dependents. At Steele High School, 40% of the students are military dependents.**



What we experienced this past spring:

- **The Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD was closed eight instructional days this past spring due to H1N1. We were the first school district in the nation to close. The following is a timeline of the events as they unfolded this past April and May.**



H1N1 Timeline:

- **Wednesday, April 22 - The principal of Steele High School received notification that two students might have Swine Flu.**
- **Thursday, April 23 – District 8 Health Authority, Dr. Sandra Guerra, called to say there were two highly probable cases of H1N1 and all parents in the District had to be notified.**
- **Friday, April 24 - Matters changed very quickly. By 8:30 p.m. we had participated in a county-wide conference call and were notified that Steele High School would need to be closed.**



H1N1 Timeline:

- **Saturday, April 25 - We spent the day preparing to close Steele High School.**
- **By 8:30 that evening, more cases had been identified and the closure went from being one campus to the entire district.**
- **The District remained closed until Thursday, May 7.**



What we did well as a district:

We used all methods of communication available to us during this time to include the following:

- Automated calling system
- Web page postings
- Traditional phone trees
- Established a plan for dealing with the media early in the process and kept our schedule
- Podcasts
- Streamed meetings with media live
- Set up public twitter account to answer questions
- Streamed board meetings live
- Posted lessons for students on-line



Lessons we learned:

- **Conflicting messages from the different entities caused confusion during the time we were closed.**
- **School Districts are new at dealing with pandemic situations.**
- **Cleaning facilities was necessary. Fear of the facilities is real.**
- **Patchwork closure does not appear to be effective.**
- **Political pressure is real and powerful.**
- **Closing is difficult for a community.**



Lessons we learned:

- **During normal times there are families who have difficulty functioning. During unusual times these families face additional challenges.**
- **Delivering instruction during times of closure in a seamless manner consistent with classroom instruction is the goal.**
- **We are just beginning to understand the impact a pandemic experience has on students.**
- **The guidance provided by the CDC is dynamic. Often districts need more time to adjust to new guidance.**



Looking ahead:

- **The immediacy of possibly facing another H1N1 outbreak at the beginning of the school year may catch districts off-guard.**
- **When vaccines become available, schools will be able to administer vaccinations. Community support and resources will be needed.**
- **If closure is warranted, plans need to be made to continue instruction.**
- **All parents want their children to be safe. Some are better able to find the support they need.**