



East Baton Rouge Parish School System
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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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****TWO PHOTOS ATTACHED****

1-EBRPSS Superintendent Charlotte Placide jokes with students prior to receiving their flu vaccinations today at South Boulevard French Language Academic Immersion Magnet School. 2-Placide offers student Darren Lockett support as he receives his flu vaccination today at South Boulevard School.

Flu Vaccinations For Students Offered Throughout EBRPSS

Baton Rouge, La. – Today, November 6, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS) and its health partner, Health Care Centers in Schools, announced the kick-off of the System’s first-ever influenza vaccinations program for all its school-age children. It’s the first time the vaccinations have been offered throughout the entire System. The flu immunizations are being provided to all EBRPSS students who have a completed consent form signed by a parent or guardian. Those involved hope this effort will allow vaccination of close to 40 percent of the total student population. The effort is part of a pilot program for the state of Louisiana.

According to a schedule, the immunizations will be administered to students at various System schools **from November 5 through December 12**. Information packets and consent forms are sent to students’ parents or guardians prior to the immunizations. An optional form is available for children who already have received the immunization. Health Care Center medical staff and volunteers from Southeastern Louisiana University’s School of Nursing will administer the immunization, and a medical staffer will remain on site during the entire school day.

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FLU VACCINATIONS/2

“If students are healthy, they will be in school every day,” said Charlotte Placide, EBRPSS superintendent. “And if they are at school, they will learn. That’s why this is so important.”

Besides EBRPSS, only three other school districts in the nation, and only two others in Louisiana, are participating in this innovative program. In Louisiana, the New Orleans Recovery and Shreveport school districts have signed on. **It is estimated close to 17,000 EBRPSS students in all will receive either the FluMist immunization (the majority) or an injection (for students who have asthma, certain metabolic diseases and/or who live with family members with compromised immune systems).** This program is estimated to cost close to \$300,000.

The cost of immunizations for students who qualify for the federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program will be underwritten by the Vaccines for Children program. The remainder will be covered through a generous donation by the Our Lady of the Lake Foundation. It is estimated **about 13,422 students will receive the FluMist**, while about **3,365 will receive the injection.** Research indicates children are the first to contract the flu virus, thus spreading it to family members and others. Physicians indicate that by immunizing students, there is a marked reduction in those age 35 or older who contract influenza. It takes about two weeks for the immunization to take effect in the body.

MedImmune, the manufacturer of FluMist (which is administered as a nasal spray), supports the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices’ (ACIP) recent action. The ACIP unanimously voted earlier this year to expand recommendations for routine seasonal influenza vaccination to include all school-age children up to age 18 as soon as possible and no later than the 2009-2010 flu season. For more information about FluMist, go on line to **<http://www.medimmune.com/products/flumist/index.asp>**.

The School System contracts with **Health Care Centers in Schools** for its services. Currently, there are nine Centers in System schools. Two more will be added in 2009-2010.

For more information, call Chris Trahan, EBRPSS’s director for Communications & Community Engagement, at (225) 922-5620 or (225) 274-6657.

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