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District Reports High Absence Rates Due to Illness

_Baker School District sent notices home to parents at two elementary schools this week referencing high absence rates due to flu-like symptoms._

Following District protocol, Principals Phil Anderson and Nanette Lehman notified parents at Brooklyn and South Baker Tuesday that absence due to illness levels exceeded 10% for the first time this flu season. On Monday South Baker reported just over 17% illness-related student absences; Brooklyn Primary absence rates were just under 11%. Staff absences were noted in both buildings as well.

Building secretaries confirmed absences were due to flu-like symptoms. “Most parents reported students battling respiratory symptoms along with mild fever, achiness, coughing and sneezing,” said Superintendent Mark Witty, “with a smaller number reporting gastro-intestinal symptoms accompanied by fever.”

“Attendance in other schools, including Haines and Keating, appears to be normal for this time of year,” reported Witty.

With increased levels of illness, a higher level of sanitation is maintained in schools, as suggested by the Center for Disease Control. Custodians, secretaries, teachers, food service providers, librarians and even bus drivers are encouraged to follow CDC suggested practices when cleaning common surfaces. Extra sanitation supplies are provided as well, including tissues. Students are reminded to follow healthy handwashing routines and to cover their coughs and sneezes.

More information is available by visiting the District website http://www.baker5j.org.

_The Baker 5J schools exist to be the center of community vitality eliminating the barriers for gratifying individual educational experiences in order to have capable contributing citizens with character._