



Excellence in Education
St. Lucie Public Schools
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Superintendent
E. Wayne Gent

August 26, 2016

Dear Parent,

As the 2016-17 school year begins, our principals, teachers and staff are excited to welcome students back to the classroom and we have been hard at work preparing for another great year. This year's preparations include Zika prevention efforts to ensure all students, parents, educators and school visitors stay healthy and safe.

As your Superintendent, I assure you we are working closely with the Florida Department of Health and the Florida Department of Education to monitor the situation and take appropriate action to protect our students.

As part of our partnership, we are taking the following steps:

- Sharing the Florida Department of Health's Spill the Water! kid-friendly materials to help educators integrate into classrooms important health messages on preventing mosquito bites and draining standing water;
- Ensuring our school clinic nurses and staff receive training from the Florida Department of Health on Zika prevention and symptom identification; and
- Conducting mosquito reduction activities around our campuses by getting rid of standing water where mosquitoes can breed and coordinating with local mosquito control if spraying is needed.

There are several simple measures you can take to protect yourself and your family from exposure and help prevent further spread.

What you should know:

- Zika symptoms are generally mild, but it has been linked to severe birth defects if a woman contracts the virus during pregnancy.
- There is no vaccine to prevent Zika, and there is no specific treatment for infected individuals.
- Zika is primarily spread by the bites of infected mosquitoes.

Recommended actions:

- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing to cover skin while outdoors. Wear socks that cover ankles and legs.
- Cover exposed skin with an Environmental Protection Agency-approved insect repellent. Always follow product instructions when applying. If using sunscreen, apply that first and then apply repellent.
- Eliminate sources of standing water (e.g., bird baths, pet bowls, buckets, trash bins) around your home or property. Mosquitoes can breed in as little as one teaspoon – or bottle cap of water – so eliminating even very small amounts of standing water can go a long way to reducing the mosquito population near you.
- Make sure windows and doors are covered by screens to keep mosquitoes outside.

We are looking forward to a successful school year and we will continue to take whatever steps are necessary to maintain the safety and well-being of our students and families.

If you have any additional questions about Zika, please call the Florida Department of Health's Zika Information Hotline at 1-855-622-6735 or visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "E. Wayne Gent".

E. Wayne Gent