

Several area school districts, including Horatio, DeKalb and Clarksville, have closed their doors until Monday due to high instances of the flu virus. While Texarkana schools remain open, administrators say they are taking precautions to prevent an outbreak.

Liberty-Eylau Independent School District Spokesman Matt Fry said they haven't noticed a large increase in school absences so far.

"For us to consider closing schools out attendance rate would have to be about 10 percent lower than last year's average," he said. "Our custodial staff works to disinfect classrooms and all surfaces. We also have hand sanitizer stations around campuses and encourage kids to use them."

Texarkana ISD has had about 15 students out with the flu over the past two weeks, according to Tina Veal-Gooch, the district's executive director of public relations.

"In an effort to make sure we are addressing any potential of an outbreak, our TISD building maintenance staff is increasing their efforts to disinfect classrooms, desks, door knobs and other surface areas while our teaching staff is working hard to remind students to wash their hands regularly and/or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, keep their hands out of their mouths and remember to use their elbow to cover coughs," she said. If the district reaches a daily flu absentee rate of more than 10 percent, that could possibly trigger the closing of a district, she added.

"If TISD were to reach those levels, we would review on a daily basis in order to make a determination to close," Veal-Gooch said.

Pleasant Grove ISD has had 14 conformed cases of the flu and is maintaining a 94 percent attendance rate as of Thursday, said Shelby DeMuth, the district's director of marketing and communications.

"If the district exceeds a 13 percent absentee rate due to confirmed cases of the flu, the district will consider closure, but we are not anticipating that measure at this time," she said. "Our nursing staff is diligent in communicating with parents and guardians of our sick students and we make sure to document confirmed flu cases. Our custodial and teaching staff are taking extra preventative measures to ensure sanitizing is taking place at every campus, including restrooms, water fountains, desks and keyboards."

Texarkana, Ark., School District Spokeswoman Genia Bullock said no flu cases have been reported on their campuses.