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Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are delighted to let you know about the vaccination collaboration between the Pulaski County Health Department (PCHD) and Pulaski County Public Schools.

Flu season is almost here and the PCHD wants to keep your children and the adults who care for them healthy. The flu is a contagious disease caused by a virus. When children are in a group with other children, they are more likely to get a virus such as the flu. Flu can lead to serious health conditions like pneumonia or other infections. We know that children with certain conditions are at high risk for flu complications, but many who get flu are healthy children. Unfortunately, each year many children are hospitalized from complications related to the flu. That is why it is very important for us to work together to protect the children in our care and ourselves! Here are some ways we can work together to promote health and reduce illness:

➤ **Get Vaccinated for Seasonal Influenza Every Year**

A flu vaccine is the best way to protect against getting the flu. All people 6 months and older need a flu vaccine each year.

➤ **Use Good Hand Hygiene**

Whenever children are together, there is a chance of spreading infections. This is especially true among younger children who are likely to use their hands to wipe their noses or rub their eyes and then handle objects or touch other children.

➤ **Practice Good Cough Etiquette**

It's also important to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands. Also avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, as germs are spread this way.

The students of Pulaski County Public Schools will have the opportunity to receive the Influenza Vaccine in the month of October this year. The exact dates are still being determined. In order for the PCHD to provide vaccination to your child, please **complete, sign, and return** the attached Student Influenza Vaccination Consent form to your child's school **by September 4, 2018**. In addition, you will want to read and keep the *Influenza Vaccine Information Statement*. If a completed and signed consent form is not returned to the school, your child will not be given the vaccination at school.

Please remember that your child does not have to participate in this vaccination opportunity and it does not eliminate the need for your child to receive regular check-ups with your primary care physician.

Lastly, state law requires that local health departments collect your insurance information and bill for costs associated with the administration of the vaccine. Any cost not covered by your insurance will not be billed to parents.

Sincerely,

Dr. Noelle Bissell, MD