

Schools in Texas, Ohio take precautions to avoid Ebola

Marjorie Owens and Jim Douglas, WFAA 11:50 p.m. CDT October 16, 2014



(Photo: WFAA)

ROYSE CITY — Schools in Texas and Ohio are reacting with an abundance of caution to concerns about students or staff having any connections to a possible Ebola contact.

In North Texas, it started with Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD. A father of a child at one of the district's elementaries flew on the Frontier flight from Ohio with Ebola-infected nurse Amber Vinson, who flew on the commercial flight Monday.

The man's military employer recommended the family and their child remain in isolation. The district said about 40 percent of students stayed home Thursday from Lake Point Elementary.

The school was cleaned, but not closed.

"I don't think the nurse should have been flying," said great-grandparent Bill Bauerly. But he added, "I don't believe there's danger to us or the children."

Two schools in the Royse City ISD will close Friday as a precaution.

According to a statement from the district, a health care worker who treated one of the nurses infected with the Ebola virus lives at a home with students from both Davis Elementary and Ruth Cherry Intermediate schools.

"This person has been classified as 'low risk,'" the statement read. "As a symptom-free person, there is no risk to anyone in their household or to anyone in their household attending school."

The district said the closures are out of an "abundance of caution."

Grapevine-Colleyville ISD also announced that they identified three students who were on the same Frontier Airlines flight with Vinson. Two of the students attend Silver Lake Elementary and the other attends Grapevine Middle School.

"The families have decided to keep their children home from school as a precaution," read a statement from the district.

One of the district's staff members was also on the flight with Vinson going to Cleveland, but the district said that employee has contacted the CDC and been reassured that there was no risk in traveling on the outbound flight.

The district said none of the students nor the staff member have exhibited symptoms.

The Hurst-Euless Bedford school district reported a secretary at the Transition Center was also on the Frontier flight. She too will stay at home. The district informed students through a phone message system.

In Garland ISD, the parents of four students were on board one of Vinson's flights. The students are enrolled in North Garland High School and Schrade Middle School, but district officials said the parents have been in contact with the CDC and the parents were told their seats were in a "no-risk" area and they were told it was not necessary to keep their children out of school.

Garland ISD officials said no students or parents are showing symptoms of Ebola.

Thursday, three Central Texas schools were closed also as a precaution. Belton ISD, near Killeen, made the decision to close the schools due to two students who traveled on the same flight as Vinson.

"Late tonight I learned that officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are re-evaluating the health risk to some passengers on Frontier Airlines Flight #1143 from Cleveland to Dallas," said Dr. Susan Kincannon, the district's superintendent in a statement Thursday morning. "At this time, we do not know if this will include either of the two Belton ISD students who traveled on the flight."

North Belton Middle School, Sparta Elementary, and a third middle school were among the closures. Two of the schools will remain closed Friday.

The students will remain at home for 21 days under health monitoring.

A northeast Ohio district closed two schools for cleaning because an employee might have flown on the same plane as Amber Vinson, although not the same flight.

"Somebody not showing signs or symptoms is not contagious," said Dr. John Carlo of the Dallas County Medical Society. "Therefore, kids in school are going to be perfectly safe."

He said it may not be practical to close schools or keep students quarantined for weeks, but it seems to reassure parents.

Star-Telegram

Verna's is closed: 'No fish, no pie. We're done, bye-bye.'

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BY ELIZABETH CAMPBELL

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EULESS — Verna Kight is gearing down. And with her goes the restaurant that has long been a mainstay on Texas 10.

Verna's Cafe closed Friday, topping off a 38-year career for Kight, who proudly served up her last round of junkyard omelets, chicken-fried steaks, catfish and coconut cream pie, much to the sadness of her loyal patrons.

"It's been an emotional, sentimental week," Kight said. "A lot of people tried to twist my arm to stay open." She retired once before in 1991, for only nine months. She told the *Star-Telegram* that "you can only clean the house so much, and you can only watch so much TV." Kight said she started thinking about retirement for good about a year ago. She said deciding to close was one of the most difficult decisions of her life.

"I've done just about everything," she said. Verna and her restaurant have been a staple in Euless — with both the white- and blue-collar crowds — for almost four decades, the last 14 years in an old Dairy Queen she bought in 2000.

The bright, cheery diner, which was festooned with bouquets of flowers and balloons on Friday, buzzed with conversations and people reminiscing about their memories of Kight — and how she treated everyone like family.

"The entire city is heartbroken," said Euless Mayor Linda Martin, who helped serve food and greeted friends who stopped by for a home-cooked meal. Randy Swain, who lives in Granbury and is still a regular at Verna's, recalled how he and his buddies started going to the cafe for lunch when they were seniors at Trinity High School.

"We came for double chicken-fried steak, no vegetables," he said. "This is a bittersweet day for Euless." Tommy White stood outside the cafe and wondered where he would now go for lunch. His favorites were the fried catfish and meatloaf.

"I didn't know it was shutting down," White said. "I noticed the crowd and knew something was going on." Kight said she doesn't know what she will do in her retirement, other than spend more time with her children and grandchildren.

"I'm healthy, and I don't take any prescription drugs," she said. She is proud of what she accomplished at Verna's, and the restaurant's place in the growth of the area, which sits between Dallas/Fort Worth Airport to the north and Arlington to the south.

"We've built bridges, houses and highways here," she said. "Contractors came in and spread out their blueprints." A sign posted on the door of Verna's Cafe at closing time said it best:

"No fish, no pie. We're done, bye-bye. Thank you for your support, we are now closed."