



Dear directors,

As you may know, many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are continuing to experience outbreaks of the Zika virus, and limited local transmission has also occurred in Florida and along the southern border of Texas. As we embrace warmer spring weather and approach peak travel season, the risk of spreading the virus becomes more imminent.

The Tennessee Department of Health and the Tennessee Department of Education are committed to preventing the spread of this virus in our state, particularly given the threat this disease presents to pregnant women and their babies. To that end, we have several resources to share with you, and we appreciate your support sharing these resources in your local communities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided some helpful resources to assist you in communicating with the staff, students, and families at your school about the Zika virus. The [Zika Communication Toolkits](#) were created for schools serving pre-K through high school students and for institutions of higher education.

Further guidance from the CDC for district and school administrators in the U.S. regarding the Zika virus has recently been released and endorsed by the Tennessee Department of Health. This guidance can be found [here](#). Extensive additional information is available on the Tennessee Department of Health website ([here](#)); you may also call your local or regional health department with questions ([here](#)).

The key points of this guidance are:

- Follow all CDC travel recommendations.
- Nondiscrimination and privacy measures should be maintained for all students and staff.
- It is not recommended for schools to remove students or staff members who have the Zika virus disease or who were exposed to Zika virus, or to cancel school-related activities because of Zika virus concerns.
- School administrators can help provide safe school environments through mosquito bite prevention efforts and sharing accurate Zika virus information with school communities.

Please share these resources widely, as spring vacations are underway and summer vacations are on the horizon for both students and teachers. We are grateful for your partnership in helping protect Tennessee students and families from Zika and other mosquito-borne illnesses, and we wish everyone in our schools a safe and healthy travel season.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Candice McQueen".

Candice McQueen, Ph. D.  
Commissioner  
Tennessee Department of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John J. Dreyzehner".

John J. Dreyzehner, MD, MPH, FACOEM  
Commissioner  
Tennessee Department of Health