

Dear Chipperfield Elementary School Community:

24 Sep 2018

Thank you for your patience as we have continued to work on a long-term plan to address moisture and mold issues at Chipperfield Elementary. As you know, small amounts of mold were discovered in the school over the summer and we closed school for 4 days at the start of the school year while we thoroughly cleaned and tested the building to ensure it was safe for students and staff.

We wanted to provide you with an update on the issue:

What have we done? In August we hired nationally recognized Belfor, a remediation company that deals with schools and other large institutions and companies nationwide, to clean and test the school. They worked alongside our own maintenance and custodial staff and coordinated with 1Source, another industry-leading company that addresses environmental health and safety issues in buildings. 1Source collected air samples and conducted thorough visual inspections in all affected areas. Both organizations gave us the “all clear” to allow students and staff back in the building.

What happens next? Reports from 1Source and Strunk-Albert Engineering (a firm with which we regularly work) offer a number of suggestions for how to monitor and address the possibility of future mold growth. Unfortunately, an extremely wet and humid summer led to difficult conditions that have left many buildings in our area struggling with these issues. Among the suggestions that we will implement:

- Precise training for our custodial/maintenance staff so they can easily recognize the conditions causing mold and how to perform inspections and small area clean-ups – not just for Chipperfield, but for all of our schools.
- Review and modify cleaning procedures for the school’s air handling units and scheduling regular cleanings
- Review and modify cleaning procedures for our carpets to ensure the carpets dry as quickly as possible.
- Review and evaluate our HVAC system design, operation and maintenance to provide options for indoor humidity control and to prevent condensation.
- Repeat air quality tests at 30 day intervals through December 2018 to ensure safety and seasonally thereafter.

What decisions must our administration and school board now make? Options being considered (as recommended by our engineering firm) include:

- Rearrange our fan coil unit to help promote better circulation and cut down on condensation.
- Operate our boiler unit and chiller unit at the same time to reduce condensation.
- Replace fan coil units, add space humidistats, and modify water piping connections to promote better air circulation and reduce condensation.

- Install five or six Dedicated Outside Air Systems (DOAS) that would fully treat (heat, cool and/or dehumidify) ventilation air prior to it being introduced into the building.
- Maintain the existing HVAC system in its current state and add permanent indoor, standalone dehumidifiers throughout the building.

First and foremost, the health and safety of our students and staff is our priority. We need to carefully evaluate and balance economically reasonable solutions that will address our concerns, and we'll do so with the support of independent professionals. Unfortunately, this is a common problem that many buildings with older HVAC systems face. The solutions are not always inexpensive, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach that works for each building.

We'll continue to keep you updated as we monitor and address this issue. We appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Cosmas Curry, Superintendent