



WILLIAM J. GRETZULA, Ed.D.
Superintendent

PENNSBURY SCHOOL DISTRICT

134 Yardley Avenue • Post Office Box 338
Fallsington, Pennsylvania 19058-0338
Telephone: (215) 428-4111
Fax: (215) 428-4270
www.pennsburysd.org

February 24, 2021

Dear Oxford Valley Elementary School Families and Staff,

This correspondence summarizes a concern that has arisen at Oxford Valley Elementary School. As some may recall from previous years, the District follows up on any facilities concerns with due diligence and transparency. We have run air quality tests at Oxford Valley Elementary School in the past with no specific concerns reported.

A staff member at the school recently reported a medical concern that led to mold testing in Rooms C-24, C-25 and C-26. The latter two rooms are actually one classroom with a divider. Our new Director of Facilities, Mr. Tim Holman, who has been wonderfully responsive, addressed the concern quickly and had our partners from Element Environmental Solutions test for mold late last week. I have linked copies of Mr. Robert Pfromm's reports at the bottom of this letter. Mr. Pfromm shared these results with staff during a faculty meeting scheduled on February 15th.

During the Google Meet, which included participation from Mr. Holman, our Director of Elementary Education Ms. Spack, Building Principal Ms. Minnigh and Mr. Pfromm, the following details were explained:

- All 3 classrooms had evidence of mold in the carpets. The carpets were removed from these classrooms last week.
- Airborne mold counts "were quite low," according to Mr. Pfromm. The number in the carpets was concerning enough, although it would take movement by many kids to kick up the mold. With low attendance during hybrid instruction, this is believed to have helped minimize the risk.
- The carpet tiles sit directly on cement, so it tends to be cooler underneath. When humidity exceeds 60%, as it may in the summer, risk for mold

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elevates. The mold is contained in the fibers and was not found to be growing on top of the carpet.

- C-25 and C-26 also had old wooden teacher desks with mold on the back, side and/or underneath. The desks were removed as soon as possible.
- Staff and students had been relocated while the work was completed in C-24, C-25 and C-26.

Additionally, Mr. Holman expressed a concern to Mr. Pfromm about the basement and crawl space under certain portions of the building. This concern underwent further testing. Mr. Pfromm believes from his results that the issues of mold in the basement/crawl space are not creating the issues above and inside the building. Specifically, the Element Environmental Solutions staff took samples of the following:

- Samples by the low wall in the back of the basement by the crawl space,
- Samples approximately 2/3 toward the front of the basement,
- 4 samples of suspected mold on wood surfaces in the basement, and
- An outside air sample.

The results were definitive for the presence of mold on surfaces and in the air samples. Levels are high and could be problematic for those who suffer allergies, etc. Mr. Pfromm stated clearly that he does not believe the mold in the basement/crawl space is getting into the rooms above based upon the fact that what was detected in one location was not present or not comparable in the other (i.e.: classrooms compared to basement/crawl space).

Last, there was the presence of mold in a technology closet in the library. This area also underwent additional testing, along with other locations throughout the building with a particular focus on the B-Hallway and C-Hallway.

Throughout his career, Mr. Pfromm suggested he has advised shutting classrooms and schools in other situations, but in the case of Oxford Valley Elementary School, he was not advising us to do so.

More data collection was recommended, however, and we agreed to do so and share results transparently along with any plans for remediation. Early strategies have included:

- Already removed carpeting from three classrooms,
- Perform additional testing of random classrooms (2-3 rooms) per hallway to with results available within 24 hours,
- Increase knowledge of processes we use for carpet cleaning to determine effectiveness and enact any suggested enhancements,
- Review ventilation spaces around the perimeter of crawl space to determine effectiveness. This will be done in conjunction with D'Huy Engineering, Inc., and
- Place HEPA units in the library to actually filter the air, rather than use of the air purification units.

The team at Oxford Valley has asked many direct and poignant questions of Mr. Pfromm, and Mr. Pfromm has answered them honestly and with great experiential knowledge. I am also grateful for the thorough and timely responsiveness of Mr. Holman and his team, along with the leadership of Ms. Spack and Ms. Minnigh. Moving forward, we are in process of the following remediation efforts:

1. The Facilities Department is scheduling for phased carpet removal within classrooms to be with floor tiles.
2. The Facilities Department has sealed the crawl space access panel from the Library. The team will clean the area as recommended by Mr. Pfromm who also said the carpeting in that area is fairly new and salvageable.
3. Element Environmental is partnering with a mold remediation company to clear the crawl space of any and all debris that would promote mold growth.
4. The District is partnering with D'Huy Engineering, Inc to develop a permanent solution for the ventilation needs for the crawlspace, which should minimize any reasons for concern moving forward. Once that is finalized, the plan will be shared with the school community.

5. The District will contract with an outside vendor to conduct radon testing. There was a radon test completed in 2019 and the results were well below the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection screening guidelines; however, there was the suggestion to proactively test for radon in the crawl space. This effort will be led by Element Environmental Solutions. As with other testing, the results will be shared transparently.

All of these steps are being taken in the interest of health and safety. We believe the findings indicate that occupants of the school are not at risk; however, we will continue to take swift action to remediate any issues that are found throughout the process, and we will continue to be transparent with the staff and community.

Respectfully,



Dr. William J. Gretzula, Ed.D
District Superintendent
Pennsbury School District

Links:

[IEQ/IAQ and Mold Evaluation Report \(2-1-21\)](#)

[IEQ/IAQ and Mold Evaluation Report \(2-17-21\)](#)

[Classroom Lab Results 1 \(2-16-21\)](#)

[Classroom Lab Results 2 \(2-16-21\)](#)

[Classroom Lab Results 3 \(2-16-21\)](#)

[Scope of Work for Basement/Crawl Space \(2-19-21\)](#)

[Crawlspace Lab Results 1 \(2-19-21\)](#)

[Crawlspace Lab Results 2 \(2-19-21\)](#)