



## Mars Area School District

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Sept. 19, 2018

Dear Mars Area Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

As you may already know, there have been reports of a “foul, musty” odor at the Mars Area Elementary School. When notified of this issue, the District took two immediate steps — (1) Because we experienced a similar odor when bats were found to be roosting in the penthouse section of the building two years ago, we contacted the exterminator to return and look to see if we have that same problem again; and (2) we engaged our maintenance crew to search for the cause of the smell and to take action to correct the problem.

The District is unsure, if we’ve completely solved the problem, but our staff found wet insulation near the fresh-air intake vent of an air handler in the penthouse section of the building. We immediately turned off the air handler to stop the moist air from being pushed into the school. All of the wet insulation was removed and the inside of the ductwork was wiped clean with Bio-Fresh cd, an all-purpose deodorizer and bacteriostat and fungistat designed for this purpose.

After students were dismissed at the end of the school day, the air handler was turned back on to dry the ductwork. In addition, we placed an industrial air purifier in the section of the building where the odor was most prominent. Today, out of an abundance of caution, we had air samples taken to ensure that we do not have issues with mildew or harmful mold. We expect to receive those results by Friday.

The odor in the building seems to be far less than originally reported. I walked the building today and spoke with several teachers and staff members. They all reported that the issue has noticeably been improved or even gone.

I take the safety and security of our students very seriously. I would never knowingly place a student or staff member in harm’s way. I have received several inquiries about why didn’t we tell the community that we have mold. Please note that at this time we have not identified any mold or mildew in the school. Air sampling is being completed to ensure that the building’s air is healthy. If I learn that we have reason to be concerned, I will take immediate action to secure the safety of our students.

Thank you.

Dr. Wesley Shipley,  
Superintendent