



Mars Area School District

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Sept. 21, 2018

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

Mars Area School District takes very seriously the personal well-being and safety of our students and staff. With recent news reports of mold concerns in school districts across the region, we wanted to communicate with our parents regarding the proactive steps that we have taken.

On Sept. 19, Accredited Environmental Technologies Inc., tested the air quality at Mars Area Elementary School. The District received an initial, verbal report on Sept. 20 stating that all mold counts are under recommended limits and, in fact, the outside air has higher counts of mold spores than in the building. The District has yet to receive official, written documentation from Accredited Environmental Technologies Inc.

Out of an abundance of caution, the District has requested that the air quality in all of our school buildings be tested. The official results, along with the test results from Mars Area Elementary School, will be posted on the District's website, www.marsk12.org, as soon as they become available.

In addition, the District brought in an exterminator to investigate whether bats, which were found at Mars Area Elementary School last school year, had returned. No bats or bat droppings were found either inside the school or in the interior penthouse areas of the building's roof. The exterminator did find evidence of a bat roosting in an area located on the outside of the building. That area was sealed to prevent the bat from returning.

The District is also continuing to investigate the source of a "foul, musty" odor reported at Mars Area Elementary School. District personnel found and removed wet insulation from an air duct, which greatly reduced the presence of the odor. This weekend, the District's maintenance staff will examine the insulation behind the walls in the penthouse areas to determine if any further action is needed. These penthouse areas are sealed from the rest of the building.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), standards or threshold limit values (TLVs) for airborne concentrations of mold, or mold spores, have not been set. Currently, there are no EPA regulations or standards for airborne mold contaminants. However, there are mold sampling protocols in place and the experts noted above are trained at interpreting the results and guiding us through our efforts. They also indicate that these spaces are safe for occupation; therefore, it is not necessary to change school time or location. Additional information about the affects of molds is available on The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) website, www.cdc.gov/mold/stachy.htm.

Our primary goal going forward, especially given the recent heat, humidity and heavy rains, is to control moisture, which the EPA indicates is the best way to control any type of mold growth. The District will keep you informed if any future results require action on the part of the District.

Thank you.

Dr. Wesley Shipley
Superintendent