

MARION CENTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent

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September 9, 2018

As you are aware, school was closed this past Friday, September 7th due to high humidity levels within the WA McCreery Elementary building which was causing condensation throughout the classrooms and hallways. The already high humidity levels spiked due to a mechanical malfunction with our chiller system. Unfortunately, the humidity has resulted in a concern for the accumulation of mold throughout the building. The initial test results conducted Thursday evening showed slightly elevated levels of spores in the air. The levels varied from room-to-room.

On Friday, the District started a process to remediate the humidity issue and conduct additional testing and visual inspections to identify all areas of concern. We are working with a representative of Intertek-PSI, who is conducting the air quality testing and offering recommendations on how to remediate the issues. At this time, we have identified three classrooms that have elevated Penicillium and Aspergillus mold spore counts according to air quality tests. The visual appearance of mold on some porous surfaces, along with the elevated spore counts throughout the building are a concern which requires the district to take action.

Per discussion with our Intertek-PSI representative and review of results, it is important to understand some information about mold and other allergens. Even though, we cannot see them, mold spores and allergens are a regular part of indoor and outdoor environments. It is normal to find some level of Penicillium and Aspergillus spores during air quality testing. However, there is not an established level of what is considered safe or unsafe, since people are affected differently. In order to ensure that all of our students and staff are safe, the District is moving forward with a remediation process. The elementary buildings will be closed until air quality tests reveal that students and staff will not be exposed to elevated mold spores within the building. In discussions with our PSI representative and Prism Response, Inc., the process could take anywhere from one week to 10 days to rectify the situation.

Several immediate actions have been taken. First, dehumidifiers and High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) air scrubbers were placed throughout the building to reduce the humidity levels and start the air purifying process. The district's maintenance and custodian staff are working alongside Prism Response, Inc. employees to start the cleaning and abatement process. Monday, all duct work will be evaluated, cleaned, and sanitized. We are also working with HVAC engineers to determine how to remediate the humidity issues that triggered the growth of mold.

Although there have not been any issues identified at Rayne Elementary School, in order to maintain a consistent elementary schedule, **school will be cancelled for ALL elementary students on Monday, September 10th through Friday, September 14th, 2018.** High School students will report as usual. The district will inform parents, staff, and the community on Friday of the results of the air samples and the plan for the following week.

Rayne Elementary and the Jr./Sr. High School have been inspected and we will continue to monitor humidity levels and air quality within all school buildings throughout the school year. We appreciate your patience and understanding, as we ensure that all students are educated in the safest environment possible.

Respectfully,

Clint Weimer

Mr. Clint Weimer
Superintendent