



Superintendent's Update

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Wed, Feb 14, 2024 at 12:00 PM

Good afternoon,

As a follow up to my January 31 [message](#) to the Long Lots School community, and the February 12 meeting of the LLS [Tools for Schools](#) (TFS) team, I would like to provide some updates.

The district continues to appropriately maintain the facility, while the town cleared a significant hurdle last night by approving funding for the design stage of a new construction!!

As the district considers all possible options in continuing to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment, I would like to share the following information.

Long Lots School Building Committee (LLSBC) Advisory Capacity

In October 2022, the [LLSBC](#) was tasked with making a long-term recommendation for LLS. In addition, the LLSBC commissioned [Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates](#) to [recommend](#) short term repairs to maintain the existing building and structural systems until the opening of a new school.

The LLSBC will now also provide support to the BOE in an advisory capacity to review the building/structural recommendations, and any other interventions related to maintaining comfortable and healthy indoor air quality while the current facility is in use.

In fact, LLSBC representatives attended the February 12 LLS Tools for Schools meeting to provide guidance as the district evaluates current measures and future actions related to Indoor Air Quality (IAQ).

The LLSBC will partner with our current team members (i.e. the LLS Tools for Schools Team, TFS Coordinator JoAnn Inserra Duncan, the [Facilities](#) Department, [Langan CT](#), [Pennoni](#) (formerly Hygenix Industrial Hygienist), and [Colliers](#) Project Leaders).

I am confident that our current team will benefit from the guidance of the LLSBC in a regular assessment of LLS and future actions until a new school opens.

Tools for School Team Update

The TFS team met Monday and reviewed recent IAQ testing and current plans. All TFS records, meeting minutes, incident reports, etc. are available for public inspection by contacting the LLS administration.

Basement Maintenance Service Closet Remediation

You may recall in my January 31 message that the malfunction of a pump in a basement maintenance service closet (an area not accessible to students or staff) incurred moisture and warranted remediation of mold and asbestos abatement of buckled floor tiles. When we find mold we follow EPA protocols for "Mold Removal in Schools and Commercial Buildings" and remediate (<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-08/documents/moldremediation.pdf>)

The maintenance service closet issue was an ordinary mechanical malfunction and not indicative of any specific IAQ concerns related to LLS. The mold has been remediated and the floor tiles will be removed over the February break.

IAQ Testing Results

As a precaution, the classroom within proximity (i.e. above the basement location) was tested, as well as two other classrooms based on parent input. The classrooms are rooms 115, 130, and 205. All tests evidenced

significantly low mold spore counts, much lower than outdoor mold spore counts. Outdoor samples are the control when doing mold testing. Carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide tested within recommended ranges and there was no detection of asbestos fibers.

Window Evaluations

A representative from Wiss, Janey, Elstner, joined the LLSBC reps in advising on window evaluations. The original plan was for our district licensed carpenters to evaluate all single glazed windows for gaps. The team recommended securing outside licensed services to evaluate all windows, not just single glazed windows, sealing and making repairs as appropriate.

Mandated Triennial Asbestos Testing

The mandated triennial asbestos testing is scheduled for June. However, the district will move that testing up to the February break.

Ceiling Tiles

In addition, the Pennoni asbestos testing team will review all ceiling tile types and test for asbestos materials in a sample of each of the different types. It is confirmed that of the three known different ceiling tile types used in LLS, none of these contain asbestos materials. If there are any other ceiling tile types in the building, the team will test those as well over the February break. However, the three known ceiling tile types, which cover most of the building, do not contain asbestos materials.

Additional Suggestions

The TFS team will continue to consider any other measures or tools that will assist in maintaining the condition of LLS until a new building is opened. These suggestions will be reviewed by the TFS team, professional experts (i.e. Industrial Hygienists, TFS Coordinator, etc.) and by the LLSBC in their advisory capacity.

Continued Intervention Measures

Below are the continued proactive measures currently in place:

- Indoor Air Quality Testing Conducted 3X year
- Temperature/Relative Humidity(RH) Sensors
 - 18 Temp/RH sensors are spread out across the building.
 - Any deviation from temperature or relative humidity norms initiates a notification to our Facilities Department.
- Commercial Dehumidifiers
 - The district leases 14 large commercial dehumidifier units that are placed throughout the building as relative humidity factors dictate.
 - There are currently no relative humidity levels of concern in the building.
 - These conditions fluctuate and are impacted more in the late summer/early fall months.
- HVAC System Optimized
 - WPS maintainers monitor systems and make repairs made as needed
 - recommendations from Wiss, Janey, Elstner to be considered
- Industrial Hygienist Consultation
 - On demand consultation from Langan CT
- SNAP Data
 - SNAP is our secure school nurse software suite that tracks student, teacher and staff health.
 - This data is tracked for any student, teacher and staff health patterns that may be related to IAQ.
 - If you have a health concern as a parent you are encouraged to report this information to the school nurse directly and have the student visit the nurse if they are having any illness concerns (that could be related to IAQ) while at school.

Additional Information

CDC Information

According to the CDC, Aspergillus/Penicillium is a common mold that lives indoors and outdoors, and since most people breathe in fungal spores every day, *"It's probably impossible to completely avoid breathing in some Aspergillus spores. For people with healthy immune systems, breathing in Aspergillus isn't harmful."*

(<https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/aspergillosis/causes.html>)

However, to be clear, this information is not intended to minimize any compromises in indoor air quality. In fact, for some individuals with allergies to mold, such compromised indoor air could lead to health problems.

Beyond that, our standards for the quality of indoor air necessitate that any instances that affect indoor air quality are addressed immediately by following proper procedures based on the individual incident. We proactively work to prevent recurrences.

For mold to grow, there needs to be moisture and a food source (I.e. paper, cardboard, etc.). Once again, if we find mold, we remediate using appropriate procedures for the specific incident, clean and work to prevent further occurrences by determining and fixing the moisture source.

CT Dept of Public Health

Indoor Air Quality Testing Fact Sheet:

https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1649440369/westport/kxlt5egioxspf76nmj/ieq_testing_should_not_be_the_first_move_6-10.pdf

If you have any questions I encourage you to contact our Long Lots School Principal, Mrs. Kim Ambrosio.

Sincerely,

Thomas Scarice
Superintendent of Schools

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