
Superintendent's Update 9-18-18 Timely and Important

Westport School District Outreach Message <Connect-ED@westportps.org>

Tue, Sep 18, 2018 at 2:02 PM



Dear Families of Coleytown Middle School Students,

The administration and Board of Education have heard feedback of tremendous concern from families of Coleytown Middle School regarding the safety of the school environment following a comprehensive mold remediation of the entire school this summer and confirmed appropriate readings on subsequent environmental testing of the school. The number of absent students exceeded 50 which is double the typical rate, and the nurse's office handled dozens of students who complained of various health complaints today. Some students and staff have expressed their individual concern about remaining in the school environment, and it was difficult for the nursing staff to determine if the presenting health issues were impacted by the anxiety of those in the school in addition to any other presenting medical symptoms.

Therefore, in an abundance of caution and to reassure our families and staff that this school continues to be a safe environment, Coleytown Middle School will be closed Thursday, Sept. 20, and Friday, Sept. 21 after the scheduled school holiday of Wednesday, Sept. 19. This pause in our school year will enable:

- A complete visual inspection of the entire facility by Hygenix, Inc.;
- A follow-up round of air testing throughout the school;
- A review of all recent student illness complaints with follow-up with local pediatricians; and
- Further consultation with medical professionals.

This period of time will allow the District to conduct a further assessment of the school environment, and all data collected will be shared with all families. These testing results will be prioritized for expedited processing in order that we can confirm through our team of environmental and medical consultants that the school reopens on Monday.

When this mold issue was first identified in the summer, the District considered various scenarios in the event the building would not be ready for the start of school or available for some portion of the school year. If, at any point in time, the school facility is found not to be appropriate for safe use, the District will relocate the students and staff to an alternate location.

The parent meeting scheduled to discuss the issue of mold remediation is still scheduled for Thursday evening, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. in the **BMS auditorium**. This session will be videotaped and posted online afterwards as well. (Please note the change in location of the meeting.)

The discussion of this topic at last night's BoE meeting, including a detailed overview of what steps have been taken to address these school issues may be found at:

<https://view.earthchannel.com/PlayerController.aspx?&PGD=wstprtsctt&eID=153> (Please advance to 40:12 for the CMS discussion.)

Written responses to questions posed during the public comment portion at that meeting will be sent to all families before the meeting on Thursday evening.

We continue to hold the safety and well-being of our students and staff as the highest priority. All testing, reports, and findings will continue to be made available to the public. The health of our children will not be compromised, and we will work in full transparency as these difficult issues are addressed. I encourage you to speak with your students about all the precautionary steps that are being taken so that they understand how carefully and thoughtfully we are handling this stressful situation.

Sincerely,
Colleen Palmer