



WALL TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

P.O. Box 1199 • 18th Avenue

Wall, NJ 07719

Dr. Tracy Handerhan
Superintendent of Schools

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May 3, 2024

Dear WTPS Community:

As you know, the District has been moving forward with the design and construction phases for various referendum projects. One of those projects is an HVAC upgrade project at Old Mill Elementary School. Because of the age of all of our District schools, the District maintains records of the locations and condition of any historic asbestos-containing materials in accordance with the *Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act* (AHERA) and the District allocates funding for regular inspections and asbestos removal according to our Asbestos Management Plan.

As a matter of practice and to ensure the safety of our staff, students, and construction crews, the District takes samples of various building materials likely to be impacted by construction activities prior to initiating major projects to confirm the absence or presence of asbestos. In preparation for the summer construction schedule and because of the need to remove ceiling tiles in nearly every classroom, hallway, and bathroom in order to implement the HVAC upgrades at Old Mill School, we arranged for asbestos samples to be collected from ceiling tiles in a bathroom, hallway, and classroom. The results revealed very low levels of asbestos content, not previously detected in earlier asbestos surveys.

In response to this unexpected finding, and in an effort to ascertain the scope and corresponding plan of action, the District contracted the services of Certified Industrial Hygienist, Dr. Richard Lynch, Founding President of *Environmental Safety Management Corporation*. After reviewing laboratory results and conducting a site inspection, Dr. Lynch advised the District to have air quality samples and bulk samples of ceiling tiles tested throughout Old Mill School. Approximately 100 air and bulk samples were collected in April 2024. The air quality lab results all revealed no airborne asbestos. These results can be accessed through the District's website (facilities page) or directly by [clicking here](#). The ceiling tiles, which were deemed to be in good condition, yielded mixed results, meaning some tiles are considered asbestos and others are not. To view these bulk tile lab results, [click here](#). While the results confirm that the ceiling tiles do not pose unusual risks to Old Mill School students, instructional and office staff, or administrators, the District has made the decision to professionally abate and replace all asbestos-containing ceiling tiles this summer (summer 2024) at Old Mill School, in advance of the HVAC upgrade project (time schedule will be shared when available).

The District recognizes that this unexpected change will impact building accessibility for this summer, but believes that professional removal of the ceiling tiles throughout the school is a prudent approach to safely completing the HVAC upgrade project while also ensuring the safety of construction crews who will be working in ceiling cavity spaces. As a result, Old Mill School will be inaccessible for the bulk of this upcoming summer. I understand that this will be



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inconvenient for some members of our WTPS community; however, this work needs to be completed before HVAC and restroom renovations can proceed. I thank you in advance for your anticipated patience and cooperation.

The District anticipates that the WTPS community may have questions about the findings, lab results, asbestos-related facts, and District plan of action. As such, arrangements have been made to have Dr. Lynch provide this information on **Monday, May 6, 2024, at 6:30 PM** in the **Old Mill School Gymnasium**. The presentation will also be made available through **livestream**. Dr. Lynch's full report, to date, is available by [clicking here](#). We invite you to join us on May 6, 2024, or view Dr. Lynch's presentation through livestream.

Sincerely,

Tracy R. Handerhan, D.Litt.

Superintendent of Schools