



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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Dr. Rosemarie T. Bovino
Superintendent of Schools,
Island Park Central School District
99 Radcliffe Road
Island Park, NY 11558

February 17, 2016

Re: Complaints regarding Indoor air –
Francis X. Hegarty Elementary school

Dear Dr. Bovino,

Thank you for speaking with me regarding indoor air quality concerns raised about the above referenced school.

During our discussions you indicated that the school has undergone extensive testing starting with the destruction from Hurricane Sandy. I appreciate your sending me all of those test reports. I have reviewed all of the reports, and I have spoken with the report authors, as well as the NYS department of Health on this issue.

The primary complaints seem focused on mold. Mold spores will always be present in facilities as a function of the concentration of mold spores in the outside air. Since the NYS building code requires 15 cubic feet per minute (cfm) of fresh outside air per occupant, a typical classroom will be provided with 450 cfm by the building heating and ventilation systems. Mold spores will be brought into the inside environment with that outside air. The real questions are: Are the spore counts inside significantly higher than outside, and are conditions inside conducive to mold growth. Interior conditions conducive to mold growth would include excessive relative humidity and temperature to allow interior building surfaces to remain damp allowing mold growth.

Based on my review of the various test results over time, there is no mold issue in the facility now, nor has there been an issue since the hurricane. There was only one instance identified during the testing performed during December 2012 that mold counts in the gymnasium closet were significantly above background levels, however, this situation arose during the renovation, and was appropriately cleaned and retested prior to the facility being re-occupied by students or staff. At no other time were interior mold counts significantly higher than outside. The test results also identify normal levels of relative humidity and temperature. Finally, there have been no active mold colony growths discovered inside the facility.

Some complaints have also been made regarding the buildings crawl space and the fact that it often floods and remains wet. I have reviewed the construction type with your architectural and engineering consultants. The building is properly designed to allow flood waters to penetrate and recede from the crawl space. The first floor is constructed of a structural concrete slab, and it has been confirmed that all communicating penetrations for utility piping between the first floor and crawl space have been properly sealed. Thus the wet crawl space is not able to impact the indoor air. This is also evidenced by the test results indicating no mold issue in the facility. Mold can grow on the surface of the crawl space concrete, but it cannot penetrate the concrete to arrive on interior surfaces of the facility.

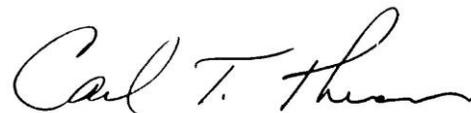
Complaints also reference wooden construction materials left in the crawl space, some apparently from the original construction as they are still attached to the underside of concrete floor. I understand the district has now removed the loose and moldy materials, and cleaned and encapsulated those that remain attached. Again, any crawl space mold cannot penetrate the concrete, and even if it could, the test results would indicate this problem if it could occur.

Please be advised that I was personally on site during the cleanup activities after Sandy, while touring several districts to get an understanding of the destruction and the potential state funding necessary to restore school facilities on Long Island. I witnessed first-hand the efforts that were made to clean the school, remove all wet and saturated materials, and test the remaining materials for moisture content. I was confident during my inspection that the corrective action was being done in a competent manner.

In summary, based on my personal knowledge of the clean-up effort, and my review of the subsequent test results, there is no evidence of a mold issue in the school. In speaking with your consultants and with the State Health Department, I believe that you have done everything necessary to try to address these issues. I do not have additional suggestions for you in this regard.

Thank you for your efforts. I understand that all of the test results will be made available on the district website and available to the public. Please contact me if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl T. Thurnau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carl T. Thurnau, PE
Coordinator