



Pearl River School District

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Marco F. Pochintesta, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

September 12, 2020

Dear Pearl River Families,

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update and address questions our school community may have regarding the ventilation systems in the schools, as well as our plans for maintaining healthy environments in the schools. We understand how important indoor air quality is, particularly as we confront the COVID-19 pandemic.

First, the District undertook a comprehensive study of the ventilation systems that serve each of the schools. Most of our indoor spaces are classrooms and these are most often equipped with what are called unit ventilator systems, and they are commonly used in schools and classrooms. These systems can be either vertical or horizontal. Vertical unit ventilation systems are usually located along the window side of a classroom, and horizontal systems are ceiling mounted. Some of our indoor spaces have ventilations systems that are roof mounted, and can serve single or multiple indoor areas, these are called air handling units. The study examined each of the 214 systems that are in our schools.

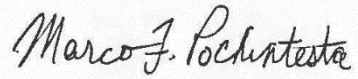
The study provided us with valuable information that we have acted on immediately. All but two of our units are functioning. These two units are in high school classrooms, 304 and 312. While we are working to bring these systems back into operation we will have HEPA filtration systems in place in these two classrooms. Our current capital project work at the high school includes upgrades to our building management system which is the electronic controls for each ventilation system that can be managed from a computer. The study highlighted this as an important feature in the overall system, and this work is nearing completion.

All of our systems operate in similar fashion and are equipped with filters. These systems are designed to bring fresh, outside air into indoor spaces, and expel excess air through vents. Every filter will be replaced with a minimum MERV 8 filter, and every ventilation unit will be cleaned by Monday, September 14. Filters will be replaced according to the recommended three month cycle. In addition, we will make every effort to increase the amount of fresh air that each unit allows by adjusting the dampers to their highest setting.

Staff may use fans in windows to expel indoor air from work spaces that have windows. Fans may not be used to blow air across indoor spaces. Work spaces and classrooms equipped with air conditioning units may use these for cooling and ventilation.

The upkeep and maintenance of our schools as physical environments is critically important and that work is ongoing. The study has provided us with a basis for an action plan and we are mobilizing quickly to address areas that need improvement and we have information that can contribute to the development of long range plans for future projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray rectangular background. The signature reads "Marco J. Pochintesta" in a cursive script.