



Toni R. Jones Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

October 23, 2018

Dear Dwight Families,

Last night, Principal Maniscalco made me aware of a social media post that confirmed a continued facility concern by parents and staff. Principal Maniscalco has been proactive in reporting Dwight's facility concerns to Central Office, and she has been in daily contact with the facilities staff. The health and safety of students and staff is our highest priority and we are ensuring all concerns are addressed.

Mr. Cullen, Executive Director of Operations, followed the Tools for Schools protocol and the experienced environmental testing firm, Woodard and Curran, conducted an environmental assessment. The findings were provided in full to the Dwight community on October 16, 2018. The Kindergarten classroom picture that has circulated on social media, is a classroom that was inspected by Woodard and Curran as a result of teacher and principal concerns. The picture circulating was taken directly beneath a wall-mounted air conditioning unit. Woodard and Curran inspected the room, opened the wall cavity in that same area and determined that no mold was present. In addition, staff removed the remainder of the trim across the entire wall to ensure the wall was free of any substance. I have attached the report again for your convenience.

As a result of ongoing concerns, Mr. Cullen will request additional direction from Sands Cleary, Fairfield Director of Health. He will also request that Woodard and Curran perform air sample testing, which was not recommended. It is generally not done when there is no visible evidence of infiltration, however I am requesting it in the best interest of the Dwight community.

At our request, Woodard and Curran has made us a top priority and will conduct air sample tests this Thursday evening (October 25). We expect the results on or before next Monday (October 29). Woodard and Curran will be onsite to address resulting questions at the October 30 meeting (6pm in the Dwight APR).

On another note, we are dealing with a separate, unrelated issue at Dwight. A failed fan actuator that is linked to the septic tank vent pipe, has caused a strong odor to emanate from the restrooms. Once the part arrives (it is on emergency order), we expect the issue to be resolved.

In closing, there is nothing more important to me than the health and safety of our children and our staff. There is no reason for any administrator, the Town, or the district to not respond or address concerns. We are relying on the experts in health and safety to guide us through this process, and we will continue to be transparent with the Dwight community as we request additional testing. Be assured that if the building were designated unsafe for occupancy, the Department of Health would not allow us to stay at Dwight, and we would relocate all 336 children and staff to alternate location(s).



Toni Jones
Superintendent of Schools

C: Tom Cullen
Executive Director of Operations
203-255-8373

Attachment

TJ:mb



Via Electronic Mail

October 15, 2018

Thomas Cullen
Director of Operation
Fairfield Public Schools
P.O. Box 320189
501 Kings Highway East, Suite 210
Fairfield, CT 06825

Re: Environmental Assessment, Timothy Dwight Elementary School
1600 Redding Road, Fairfield, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Cullen:

As requested, Woodard & Curran performed an environmental assessment at the Timothy Dwight Elementary School facility located at 1600 Redding Road in Fairfield, Connecticut. The purpose of the assessment was to determine if there was evidence of fungal growth on certain building materials at the Timothy Dwight Elementary School. Woodard & Curran's October 4, 2018 assessment included areas identified by School representatives where concerns had been raised.

It was reported by Fairfield Public School Operations that humid weather conditions over the summer and early autumn resulted in damp conditions in several classrooms at Dwight Elementary School. Employees who work in classrooms 10, 15, and 17 expressed concerns regarding the presence of fungal growth as well as throat irritation. It was reported that school department personnel performed moisture meter measurements of the wallboard in classroom 10 and reported elevated moisture levels when measured in September. Based on the moisture measurements, dehumidifiers were placed in classrooms 10, 15, and 17 to reduce the humidity. Teachers in these classrooms were instructed to close windows while the dehumidifiers were in use.

BACKGROUND

Fungal growth can occur due to damp conditions within a building and is not always visible. It can be hidden in wall cavities, above ceilings, in structural framing materials, subflooring, insulation and other normally covered building materials.

Fungus thrives in damp organic matter and fungal growth media can vary widely. Examples of media that can support fungal growth include stagnant water, damp wood, backing on carpet and carpet pads, cellulose ceiling tiles, and paper facing on gypsum board. Interior finishes such as vinyl cove base and vinyl wall covering may hold moisture against gypsum board or wood, thus enhancing the conditions for fungal growth.

METHODS

Visual Inspection

Woodard & Curran conducted a visual inspection in the School to determine if obvious sources of suspect fungal growth were present. The roof and areas above the suspended ceiling tiles were also visually inspected. A borescope was used to inspect areas within wall cavities in classrooms 10, 15 and 17.



Moisture Survey

The moisture content of building materials was evaluated using a GE Protimeter Surveymaster® digital moisture meter, which has two operating modes: search and measure. In search mode, the instrument uses a non-invasive radio frequency emission technique to locate moisture and can penetrate most wall and floor coverings, including ceramic tiles, to a depth of approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. It displays a semi-quantitative result on a scale of colored lights. In measure mode, the instrument uses the electrical conductivity of a porous building material to indicate its level of free water. Two electrode pins are inserted into the material and the moisture level is displayed on a digital numeric display in units of wood moisture equivalent (WME). WME is the water content that wood would have if it were in contact with the material being tested for sufficient time to reach moisture equilibrium. It is the ratio of the weight of the water in the wood to the dry weight of the wood, expressed as a percentage. Prior to use, the calibration of the instrument was checked using a Protimeter Check calibration device.

RESULTS

Visual Inspection

The following observations were made:

- In classrooms 10, 15, and 17, some of the walls are constructed of concrete masonry unit block while other walls are constructed of a layered cellulose-based wallboard with textured finish that is painted.
- No visible suspect fungal growth was observed on the CMU walls or cellulose-based wallboard material in classrooms 10, 15, and 17.
- The layered cellulose-based wallboard material is also used as bulletin boards in these classrooms. No visible suspect fungal growth was observed on or behind the bulletin boards in classrooms 10, 15, and 17.
- No evidence of active water leaks, water staining, or fungal growth was observed on the acoustical ceiling tiles in classrooms 10, 15, and 17.
- Limited evidence of oxidation was observed on the corrugated metal decking above the acoustical ceiling tiles in rooms 10, 15, and 17. This may be related to elevated moisture in the building or storage of building materials during construction. The roof was reportedly replaced three years ago and appears to be in good condition.
- A solar array is located on the majority of the roof of the school, including above classrooms 10, 15, and 17.
- In classroom 8, a small quantity of suspect fungal growth was observed on the wallboard near a sink. This area, reportedly, is where students routinely wash and dry their hands and where the trash barrel is stored. Adjacent to this area, clipboards were hung/stored on the wall. There was some light particulate debris behind these clip boards.
- A borescope was used to inspect the interior wall cavities of the layered cellulose-based wall in classrooms 10, 15 and 17. This inspection included two walls in classroom 10, and one wall in classroom 15 and 17. No water damage or suspect fungal growth was observed in the wall cavities inspected with the borescope.
- Small portions of the bulletin boards in classrooms 10, 15, and 17 were removed during the assessment to observe the conditions behind the bulletin boards. No suspect fungal growth was observed.

A photo log is included as Attachment A which depicts these conditions.



Moisture Survey

Woodard & Curran conducted a moisture survey in areas noted above on October 4, 2018. The moisture survey included those rooms specified above including ceiling and wallboard materials. The moisture survey indicated that the moisture content was less than 15%, indicating dry conditions, in classrooms 10, 15, and 17 as well as the area of suspect fungal growth in classroom 8.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on industry guidelines and best management practices, it is recommended that the following steps be taken:

- Continue dehumidifying the classrooms to control humidity and keep building materials dry. Consider installing other/supporting ventilation methods to better control humidity during humid months. If mechanical ventilation is not possible, operate dehumidifiers during humid periods. No other corrective actions are required based on the environmental inspection in classrooms 10, 15, and 17.
- Continue to monitor school areas for water damage and excess moisture in building materials. Continue maintenance program of replacing ceiling tiles if any water damage is observed. Note that the School's Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) records should be reviewed prior to disturbing any building materials.
- Clean the wall surfaces in classroom 8. Specifically, clean the wall surfaces to the left of the sink and the lower portion of the wall where the clipboards are hanging. Use a disinfectant or cleaning product that is approved by the School Department for housekeeping activities. Do not over saturate the area, but thoroughly wipe the wall surfaces and allow to adequately dry.

Woodard & Curran appreciates the opportunity to assist you on this project. If you have any questions or require further information, please feel free to email me at whenderson@woodardcurran.com or call me at (781) 251-0489.

Sincerely,

WOODARD & CURRAN INC.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wm Henderson".

William Henderson, CIH
Project Scientist

Attachment A: Photo Log



ATTACHMENT A: PHOTO LOG

ATTACHMENT A – PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo Number: 1

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: Wallboard material in Classroom 10, prior to borescope inspection

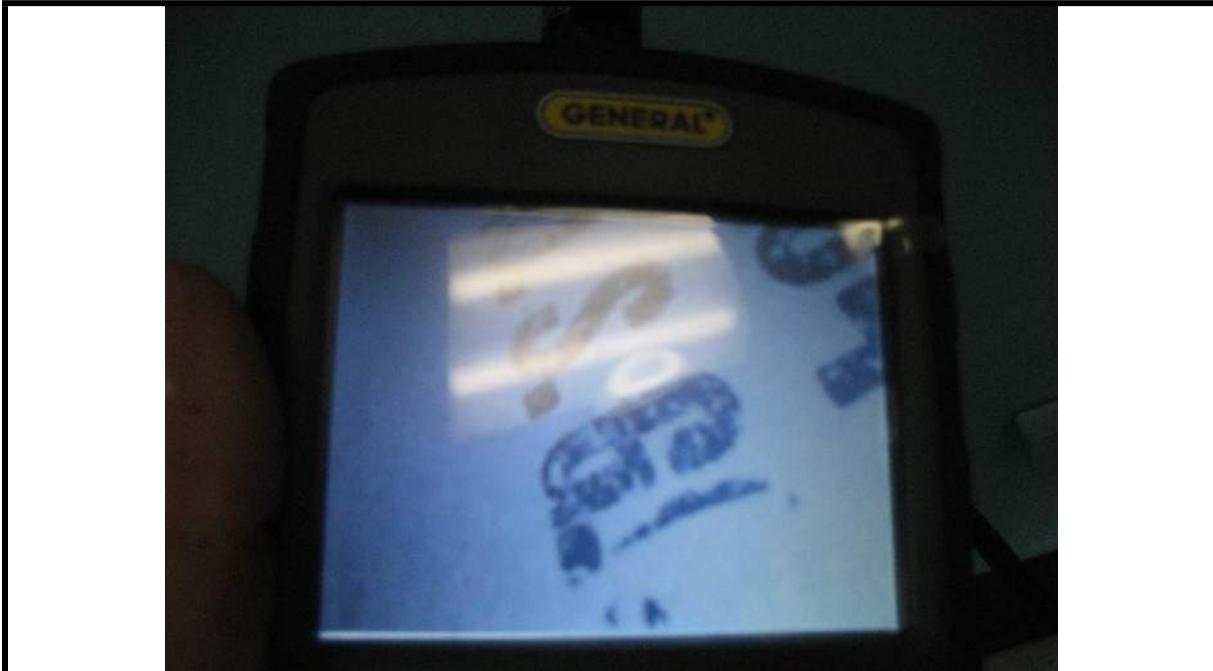


Photo Number: 2

Date: 10/04/2016

Description: Wall cavity in Classroom 10

ATTACHMENT A – PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo Number: 3

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: Interior and surface of bulletin board in Classroom 10



Photo Number: 4

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: Above suspended ceiling in Classroom 10

ATTACHMENT A – PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo Number: 5

Date: 10/04/2016

Description: Wallboard material in Classroom 15, prior to borescope inspection



Photo Number: 6

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: Wall cavity in Classroom 15

ATTACHMENT A – PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo Number: 7

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: Interior and surface of bulletin board in Classroom 15

ATTACHMENT A – PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo Number: 8

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: Above suspended ceiling in Classroom 15



Photo Number: 9

Date: 10/04/2016

Description: Wallboard material in Classroom 17, prior to borescope inspection

ATTACHMENT A – PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo Number: 10

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: Wall cavity in Classroom 17

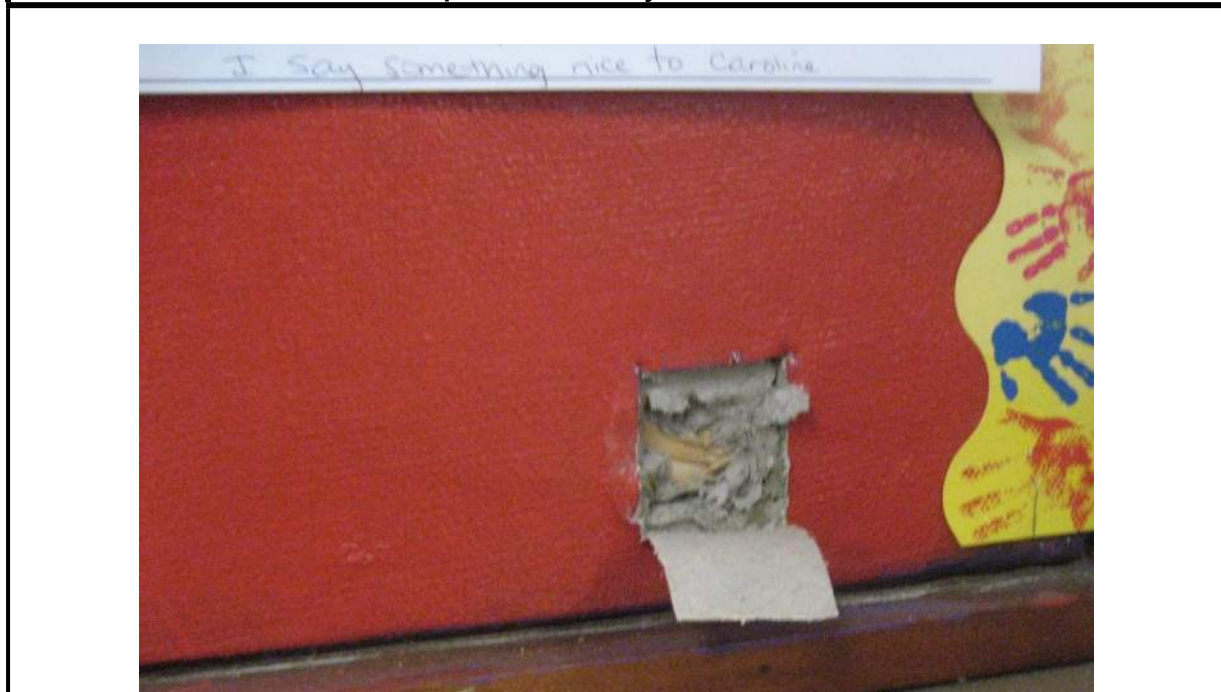


Photo Number: 11

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: Interior and surface of bulletin board in Classroom 15

ATTACHMENT A – PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo Number: 12

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: Above suspended ceiling, Classroom 17



Photo Number: 13

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: School rooftop

ATTACHMENT A – PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo Number: 14

Date: 10/04/2018

Description: Classroom 8, Wall with suspect microbial growth on surface