

November 20, 2007

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Connetquot Teachers Association  
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Dear CTA Leadership:

Based on interviews with teachers and a visual inspection of the building, the following observations can be made about indoor air hazards at Oakdale-Bohemia Middle School.

Since the completion of an initial walk-around inspection by safety specialists in the fall of 2006, and the subsequent release of their report in January 2007, the serious health hazards posed by mold and other indoor air contaminants have not been eliminated. While the administration has taken some initial steps, the hazards are far from being controlled and some relatively inexpensive intermediary measures have not been taken.

Numerous teachers cite health effects that are commonly related to indoor air hazards in general and fungi in particular. Moreover, their health effects are presenting in ways associated with workplace exposure – such as a lessening of symptoms over the summer break and the return of more serious symptoms soon after returning to work in the fall.

A visual inspection of the building confirms that water incursion continues to be a problem. Leaks are visible in some hallways, in the auditorium and in classrooms 218, 210 and others. Room 203, cited specifically in the January 2007 report, continues to have a major water leak from the wooden enclosure above the bank of windows.

An inspection of the crawl space reveals that no ventilation system has been put in place, as recommended in the report. This is significant because this school building is experiencing heightened humidity due to extremely wet conditions from the ground, in addition to leaks through the roof. Even simple industrial fans would help alleviate some of the humidity coming from below. But no such steps have been taken.

The inspection and interviews also revealed that in-room heating and ventilation units could be better maintained and serviced. Plywood is still being used to cover the intake vents on some of the units. If the outdoor air exchange/intake mechanisms are not working properly they should be repaired or the units should be replaced entirely. Indoor air quality depends on a proper mix of outdoor air and air recirculated from indoors. Additionally, the filters should be changed more frequently than once yearly and high efficiency filters should be used. While these measures are helpful in any setting they are

especially important given the presence of mold due to roof leaks and humidity. If anything, filters should be changed much more frequently until real solutions to the mold problem are undertaken.

Yours truly,

David Pratt  
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New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health