



Office of the Superintendent

Worcester Public Schools

Worcester, Massachusetts

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Maureen F. Binienda
Superintendent

March 29, 2017

To the Students, Families, and Staff of Burncoat High School,

At this time, I am writing to explain the approach the District has taken to managing PCBs in our school buildings. Many buildings, including school buildings, constructed or renovated between 1950 and 1978 were built with materials that contain PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). No additional PCB containing materials have been used since 1978, which was 38 years ago. It was not until about 2010 that the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the government entity responsible for PCB regulation, alerted schools and other building owners about PCBs in buildings and made its first recommendations for managing PCBs in buildings to minimize exposures.

According to EPA, the presence of PCBs in a building is not a cause for immediate alarm. If PCBs are present or suspected, the EPA recommends certain best management practices (BMPs) to manage these building materials. In 2012 the Worcester Public Schools voluntarily adopted the EPA's recommendations for BMPs in our schools. These BMPs include:

1. **Remove all suspected PCB-containing fluorescent light ballasts.** EPA has identified the removal of PCB containing light ballasts as the single most important step for reducing potential exposures. Note that New York City schools have just completed this step earlier this year; something WPS completed 4+ years ago.
2. **Conduct the actions listed below on a frequent on-going basis to reduce possible exposures to PCBs.**
 - a. Maintain ventilation systems so that they are operating properly
 - b. Clean inside of schools frequently to reduce dust and residue
 - c. Use a wet or damp cloth or mop to clean surfaces
 - d. Use vacuums with high efficiency air (HEPA) filters
 - e. Do not sweep with dry brooms or use dry cloth for dusting
3. **Remove suspect PCB-containing caulk, paint and other suspect PCB-containing building materials during planned renovations and repairs.**
4. **Consider encapsulating suspect materials to reduce the potential for PCB exposure.**

All of these activities have been ongoing in the school district. In addition, the Worcester Public Schools will conduct air testing for PCBs at Burncoat High School on Monday, April 3, 2017. The testing will be conducted by an environmental consultant. The monitoring will take place immediately following school hours with windows closed and the air handling system operating normally. The Educational Association of Worcester (the local teacher's union) has been invited to observe the air sampling process. Approximately 10 air samples will be collected in total throughout the building. The test results and any recommendations for additional actions will be

then shared with the school community once they are known, in approximately two weeks. The district will also share the results with the EPA.

If you have any questions, please contact the district's Environmental Coordinator Joshua Watkins at (508) 799-3151.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maureen F. Binienda".

Maureen F. Binienda
Superintendent of Schools