



June 14, 2023  
J5174-04-06

Worcester Public Schools  
20 Irving Street  
Worcester, MA 01609

Attn.: Ms. Kristen Tran,  
Environmental Health & Safety Coordinator

RE: PCB BMP Quarterly Status Report, 2022-2023 School Year  
Third Quarter, March 2023  
Burncoat High School

Dear Kristen,

In accordance with the Worcester Public School's (WPS) authorization, O'Reilly Talbot & Okun Associates, Inc. (OTO) is pleased to present this quarterly status report of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) implemented at the Burncoat High School (Burncoat). This status report represents the third quarter of the 2022-2023 school year. The objective of the BMP program is to reduce potential exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Certain materials used in the construction and renovation of buildings between 1950 and 1980 may contain PCBs. Burncoat High School was constructed during this period. The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has recommended that a BMP program be implemented in schools and other buildings either constructed or renovated during this period.

WPS and its staff are responsible for implementing the BMPs at Burncoat High School. OTO personnel are responsible for conducting quarterly independent evaluations to provide WPS management with an assessment of the effectiveness of the BMPs implementation.

### **Best Management Practices (BMPs)**

In its July 28, 2015 guidance for school administrators and other building owners and managers titled "Practical Actions for Reducing Exposure to PCBs in Schools and Other Buildings" the USEPA described potentially useful BMPs, including:

1. Ensuring that ventilation systems are operating properly and are regularly inspected and maintained according to system manufacturer instructions and guidelines or ANSI/ASHRAE/ACCA Standard 180-2012—Standard Practice for Inspection and Maintenance of Commercial Building HVAC

Systems. If system cleaning is needed, follow ANSI/ACCA Standard 6–Restoring the Cleanliness of HVAC Systems (2007);

2. Cleaning inside schools and other buildings frequently to reduce dust and residue;
3. Using a wet or damp cloth or mop to clean surfaces;
4. Using vacuum cleaners with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters;
5. Not sweeping with dry brooms or using dry cloth wipes for dusting;
6. Washing hands with soap and water, particularly before eating; and
7. Washing children's toys.

We understand that WPS has modeled its BMP program for Burncoat High School on EPA's guidelines. OTO's assessment of BMP effectiveness focuses on items 1 through 5 on this list. Regarding item 6, all school lavatories are equipped with soap and water, and it is the responsibility of students and staff to maintain personal cleanliness. Item 7 on the list is not relevant to high school environments.

### **Assessment of BMPs at Burncoat High School**

We conducted the third quarter, 2022-2023 school year BMP assessment at Burncoat on March 29, 2023, accompanied by representatives from the District and School environmental and facilities department. The Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) system was operating properly at the time of the BMP assessment.

Because window and door caulking in the school may contain PCBs, WPS has previously applied a layer of non-PCB caulk over the previously existing caulking to reduce the potential for exposures. OTO observed twenty-two (22) classrooms or other representative spaces in the school selected at random during the assessment. Our observations focused on the presence of dust on windows, windowsills, and window frames as well as the univent systems that provide heating and ventilation to the classrooms.

The school spaces we observed included:

- Cafeteria,
- Library / Media Center,
- Gymnasium hallway, and
- Other Selected classrooms or learning areas

Our general observations are summarized on Table 1 (attached). Univents were generally free of significant dust and visible oil leakage. Several rooms/areas observed were rated with "little" (minimal dust or debris) to "moderate" (visible accumulations of dust) on window caulking itself. We observed some rooms with deteriorating or missing non-PCB

caulk. Windows with deteriorating or missing caulk and moderate dust accumulation were identified at the time to District and School facilities representatives and are documented in the attached Table.

Based on our discussions and observations, it is our conclusion that the implementation of the BMPs at Burncoat is generally effective. We recommend that areas observed with missing caulk receive an application of non-PCB caulk sealant, and that areas noted to have moderate dust accumulation be cleaned in accordance with "Practical Actions for Reducing Exposure to PCBs in Schools and Other Buildings" guidance.

Note that WPS has also authorized OTO to conduct annual indoor air monitoring for PCBs at Burncoat. The full air testing reports are provided separately from the BMP reports, and the air monitoring results have been well below USEPA guidelines for PCB concentrations in school air for each of the sampling rounds completed to date.

### **Other USEPA Recommendations for Suspected PCBs in Schools**

Although not technically BMPs, USEPA made three other recommendations in its July 28, 2015 guidance for PCBs in schools:

- Remove all PCB containing fluorescent light ballasts (FLBs);
- Give consideration to encapsulating suspected PCB containing materials (such as caulk) to further reduce the potential for PCB exposure; and
- Removing suspect PCB containing building materials during planned renovations and repairs.

WPS removed all suspect PCB containing FLBs in 2012. There are no suspected PCB FLBs remaining in the Worcester school system.

In 2012 WPS also encapsulated the suspect PCB containing caulk around the windows and doors at Burncoat with an additional thick layer of non-PCB caulk. Exterior suspect caulking was likewise covered with new caulk to a height of eight feet above grade. WPS subsequently over-caulked the remainder of the building's exterior door, window, and expansion joints in September and October 2018. This over-caulking is repaired as needed to maintain its condition.

Finally, it is noted that WPS has applied to the State sponsored school building financing program for help with the replacement of the Burncoat High School building. When Burncoat is replaced, the suspect PCB containing materials will be removed and disposed of in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements.


## Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, it is our opinion that the BMPs are being implemented in a generally effective manner at Burncoat High School. We recommend that Facilities personnel visit the areas where sections of and/or entire seams of caulk appeared missing, or where dust accumulation was identified as “moderate” to install caulking and perform cleaning as needed in those areas, respectively. We also recommend that the next quarterly (fourth quarter of the 2022-2023 School year) on-site visit be conducted in June of 2023.

Should you have questions or require additional information, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,  
O'Reilly, Talbot & Okun Associates, Inc.

  
Jonathan Hermanson, CHMM  
Staff Scientist

  
Robert Kirchherr, CSP  
Principal

**Attachments** Table 1 – Summary of Observations for Burncoat High School

**cc** Mr. Richard Ikonen, Facilities Director

Table 1 - Summary of BMP Observations  
 Burncoat High School  
 179 Burncoat Street  
 Worcester, MA 01602  
 March 29, 2023

Room	Condition of Caulk	Condition of Univents	Dust Accumulation	Comments
A-1	VG	VG	L-M	Unable to access windowed storage area
A-5	VG	VG	VG	--
A-7	M	VG	VG	1st office, 1st window from left, generally deteriorating and 6" of caulk missing
A-9	S	VG	VG	A-9C, left window, bottom pane, bottom seam, all caulk missing
A-Hallway	M	VG	L	3rd window from left, middle pane, bottom seam, 18" of caulk missing
B-16 Cafeteria	M	VG	M	1st window from right, bottom pane, bottom seam, 12" of caulk missing
B-19	VG	VG	L	--
B-25	VG	VG	VG	--
C-15 Library / Media Center	VG	VG	VG	--
C-1B	VG	VG	VG	--
C-5	L	VG	L	3rd window from right, bottom pane, bottom seam, 2" of caulk missing
C-19	VG	VG	VG	--
D-2	VG	VG	L	--
D-12	VG	VG	M	Plywood over left window in office
D-14	VG	VG	VG	--
D-24	VG	VG	VG	--
E-2	VG	VG	VG	--
E-3	M	VG	VG	5th window from left, bottom pane, bottom seam, 24" of caulk missing
E-5A	VG	VG	VG	--
F-10	VG	VG	M	--
F-14	VG	VG	M	--
Gym Hallway	VG	VG	VG	--

#### CATEGORIZATION

Very good = VG: disturbance or dust or debris minimal

Little = L: enough dust to leave a residue on a gloved finger or little disturbance

Moderate = M: visible accumulations of dust or moderate disturbance

Significant = S: thick layer of dust or significant disturbance