March 02, 2020

Dear Pine Grove Manor School Community:

On February 14, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) issued a memorandum providing guidance to school districts regarding the evaluation of flooring systems that may emit mercury vapors. A number of companies installed flooring systems containing mercury into school multi-purpose rooms between the years 1960 and the early 2000s, as noted in the NJDOE memo. Immediately upon receiving the NJDOE guidance document, I forwarded it to Franklin Township Public Schools Buildings and Grounds Department for review. The Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds analyzed flooring throughout the district. It was determined that, even though the floor in the Pine Grove Manor (PGM) multi-purpose room was refinished in 2009, the original flooring system that rests underneath that floor may be a system that contains mercury. As a result, samples of the PGM multi-purpose room flooring system were collected on February 20, 2020, and sent out for testing to determine whether they contained mercury.

During the afternoon hours on Thursday, February 27, 2020, the district received the results of the laboratory testing on the samples taken from the PGM multi-purpose room sub-floor. The results confirmed that mercury was, in fact, present in samples taken from the PGM multi-purpose room sub-floor. However, please note, as per the testing report, this does not mean that the mercury is volatilizing and airborne. Therefore, even though mercury is present in the original flooring system it doesn’t necessarily translate into a hazardous situation.

With that said, the district is taking the necessary steps to further evaluate the situation. Those steps include closing the PGM multi-purpose room while the recommended air sampling is completed. This test will determine whether mercury vapor is present in the air of the PGM multipurpose room. The air sampling is scheduled to take place this week, and the results should be available by the end of this week. Once the results of the air sampling are in hand, a second communication will be distributed updating everyone on the situation.

Please know that the district is committed to the safety and health of all in our learning community. Regardless of the test results, we pledge that the next steps will include the safe removal of the existing floor and the installation of a new mercury-free flooring system as soon as possible.

Thank you for your support. If you have any questions or would like further information regarding the evaluation and management of mercury-containing floors in New Jersey Schools, you can access both the February 14th NJDOE memorandum to schools and the New Jersey Department of Health guidance document on the PGM website.

Sincerely,

John A. Ravally, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools