September 27, 2019

Dear East Rutherford Parents/Guardians:

In June, we became aware of the possibility that the rubberized floor at McKenzie School contained mercury. Many manufacturers of this type of flooring used mercury in the manufacturing of rubberized, polyurethane floors to keep them flexible over time.

As a result of this information, we contacted the school district’s environmental consulting company, EnviroVision Environmental Services, Inc., who recommended we conduct bulk sampling for suspected mercury in the polyurethane/rubber. The sampling was sent to EMSL Analytical, Inc. in Cinnaminson, New Jersey who conducted the analysis for total mercury concentrations.

During the summer of 2019, we received a report from the district’s environmental consulting company, indicating that the floor samples, from the McKenzie School gym, contained levels of mercury. As part of the 2019-2020 school budget, the District was scheduled to replace the gym floor at McKenzie School. The District has decided to hold off on the project until all necessary testing has been performed and analyzed by the environmental consultant company, so the District can determine the best course of action for removal. To date, the District has performed air mercury vapor studies, with and without ventilation units running in the gym.

While the report indicated the presence of mercury vapors, the airborne mercury levels tested below the mercury recommendations/guidelines as per the U.S. Center for Disease Control Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry, and the NJ Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act Permissible Exposure Limit. As per the mercury guidelines mentioned, the McKenzie School gym may be used on a daily basis with the ventilation system operating in occupied mode. Should any new official information become available or the State of New Jersey develops any new guidelines or recommendations, we will reevaluate our situations in accordance with the latest developments.

The amount of mercury vapor in the air can be affected by ambient temperature and ventilation. Higher temperatures and reduced air movement increase the concentration of the mercury vapors. All ventilation systems in the McKenzie gym will remain on. The ventilation systems in the affected area are independent of the other ventilation systems in the building.

The District will work with the environmental company to monitor the air quality in the gym at McKenzie School for the remainder of the school year as we explore an appropriate course of action. It is our intent to be transparent and share information with the school community.

The Board of Education and the District’s Leadership Team will continue to make every effort in addressing this concern, without compromising the safety and well-being of all who attend, work, and visit our district schools.

Sincerely,

Giovanni A. Giancaspro
Superintendent of Schools