



LA HABRA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT – SUPERINTENDENT’S OFFICE

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November 13, 2014

Dear Parents and Staff:

Modernizing Safe & Healthy Schools

When our modernization bond passed in 2012, the community said it trusted us to manage the bond funds prudently so we could carefully create effective, healthy learning environments for our students built to the highest safety standards. We appreciate that your vote for Measure O was a vote of confidence in our district.

I am pleased to report that we are meeting the goals of Measure O. We have successfully completed the following modernization projects: courtyards, technology infrastructure, a one-to-ratio of iPads for middle school students, new marquees at the middle schools, and strategic roofing repairs at all district schools. As we embark on the next phase of the Measure O building program we will continue to make safety our highest priority. That is why we are writing this letter to explain the steps we are taking to be extra careful as we modernize some rooms in our schools that may have building materials that contain asbestos.

There is no significant risk of asbestos exposure in our schools

Asbestos is all around us. It appears naturally in Serpentine, California’s state rock that is present in the soil of 44 of California’s 58 counties. Asbestos was widely used as fireproofing in older buildings and in automobile brake pads during the 1960s. In fact, nearly half of the public schools in America still have some levels of asbestos. Once scientists concluded that prolonged exposure to high levels of asbestos might cause cancer, the federal government outlawed the further use of asbestos as a fireproofing material in 1978. It is important to realize that asbestos can only cause a health risk if it is disturbed and becomes airborne. If it is not moved or is covered then health agencies consider it to be “abated in place.” In La Habra that is what we did. We left it safely undisturbed.

Our asbestos air tests show LHCS D classrooms are well within healthy standards

Last week, we conducted air sampling tests to give us benchmark readings before the work commences. Those test results are in and they show that all sites are well within the federal threshold for the allowable level of asbestos particles in the air. Results showed very low or non-detect levels of asbestos in our classrooms. When the work is completed we will deep clean the rooms and re-test these sites to make sure the airborne asbestos level is within health standards. We aim to keep our rooms safe as we work on our Measure O projects.

LHCS D follows a proactive asbestos management plan

State, local, and federal health agencies require public schools to do three things routinely to comply with the AHERA law of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). They must:

1. Have an asbestos management plan and test reports on file and accessible for review at each campus,
2. Use a licensed certified industrial hygienists to visually inspect classrooms at least every three years to make sure that asbestos is not disturbed, and
3. Follow precautions and safeguards whenever construction is done on facilities that might contain asbestos to isolate work areas from spreading asbestos dust.

That is exactly what we are doing in the La Habra City School District as we implement the building projects under Measure O.

Beginning on November 17th, work crews will be at the following schools working on asbestos abatement and remodeling projects:

Washington Middle School

Rooms 1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38.

Imperial Middle School

Rooms 9, 10, 11, 25, 27, and 28

The libraries at both schools also will be worked on, but there is no asbestos present there.

Safeguards we follow during asbestos abatement

Since we take student health and safety very seriously, we made several decisions to guide our contractors and workers as they launch these modernization projects.

- No asbestos abatement will take place when school is in session
- All areas will be isolated and contained with plastic sheeting so asbestos dust does not spread through the air or the HVAC ducts
- Asbestos clean-up refuse will be double bagged and disposed of according to industry standards
- Licensed contractors with experience in asbestos removal will be used
- Each school will have an informational sign alerting people to exactly where the abatement process is going on inside the school grounds
- Teachers, staff, and site administrators will be informed when work relating to asbestos removal is being done at their schools

You will receive regular updates on asbestos abatement activities

La Habra City School District is committed to transparency during the construction process and will keep you fully informed as asbestos materials are detected and eradicated from our schools. Asbestos abatement has always been a feature of the Measure O plans. We plan to do it right; with the highest degree of safety and the least disruption to our classrooms and learning environment.

The district has opened a special **Healthy Schools Information Center** link on the home page of our web site (www.lahabraschools.org). There, we are posting test results, work plans, updates, facts sheets, FAQs, timelines, photographs, and other resources so you can feel confident that we are keeping your child safe and healthy at school. If you have questions or concerns please contact your school principal.

Thank you for your patience and support as construction takes place to modernize and renovate our schools.

Thank you,



Susan Belenardo, Ed.D.
Superintendent