



# THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

September 30, 2019

Dear Benjamin Franklin High School Faculty and Families:

On September 25, 2019, during a joint walkthrough with the School District of Philadelphia's Environmental Director and the Environmental Science Director for the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers' Health & Welfare Fund ("PFTH&WF/U") damaged insulation material was observed on ductwork in the boiler room. Testing of the material confirmed that it contained asbestos.

Staff from the School District and PFTH&WF/U continued to inspect the path of the ductwork in the boiler room to other parts of the building and on Thursday, September 26, we identified a second damaged insulation material in the Commons area for Science Leadership Academy. **The damaged material is located within an area that is currently under construction.**

This weekend, areas within the first floor construction area and areas immediately outside the construction space were tested for the presence of airborne asbestos fibers. The results were below the Philadelphia Department of Health's threshold for occupancy. No airborne asbestos fibers were detected on the samples collected from outside the work area, however fibers at a low concentration were detected on a sample collected within the construction area. The samples collected from the boiler room did indicate the presence of airborne asbestos at levels that need to be addressed.

**With the safety of our students and staff as the highest priority, the building will be closed on Tuesday, October 1 and Wednesday, October 2.** During this time the School District and PFTH&WF/U will do the following:

1. Start asbestos abatement of the damaged materials in the first floor SLA Commons. While abatement is underway, construction activities will stop.
2. Continue cleaning in the boiler room in preparation for the asbestos abatement project.
3. Conduct further joint testing extending beyond the areas sampled this weekend to rule out the presence of airborne asbestos fibers in other areas of the building.
4. Reclean the floors and hallways immediately adjacent to the areas directly outside where abatement activities are occurring.

Construction activities will continue as planned in the first floor cafeteria, fifth floor SLA science labs, and entire sixth floor for both schools. These areas will continue to be monitored and tested for dust and thoroughly cleaned by the contractor.

The School District and PFT will meet to review the progress of abatement and testing to determine the status of opening on Thursday, October 3. Please continue to check the School District's website for announcements and to access the asbestos testing results completed to date.

We appreciate your patience and apologize for any inconvenience this building closure may cause. You may contact the Office of Environmental Management and Services at 215-400-4730 with your questions, feedback or other concerns.

Sincerely,

Danielle Floyd  
Chief Operating Officer

Cc: Ryan Scallon, Neighborhood Network Assistant Superintendent