



# STEPHEN DECATUR ELEMENTARY

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Hello Decatur families,

As part of its work to prepare all schools for in-person learning, the School District has contracted with five highly qualified vendors to perform ventilation assessments, otherwise called Air Balance Tests, in every school. This quick [video](#) shares more about Certified Air Balance Testing. I'm writing to share our school's report as well as other important information to help you understand the results and what they mean for our school.

The Air Balance Test report for our school is posted on our website at [Stephen Decatur School](#) and can be accessed directly [here](#).

Here's what's important to know:

- **What does the test measure?** The test detects the number of cubic feet of outside air flowing through the room every minute (CFM). This number is used to determine the maximum occupancy of that room to maintain proper air flow. The recommended standard, set by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), is 15 CFM per person.
- **Why is outside air flow important?** Bringing outside air into a building improves air quality by diluting the amount of any contaminants that may be in the air. Proper air flow, together with mask wearing, social distancing, handwashing and other health and safety measures, can further help minimize the spread of coronavirus.
- **How do I read the report?** The report lists the maximum occupancy of every room within our school building based on the recommended standard. Below is a sample report (left) and a key (right) that explains key terms used in the report.

School:	School Name			Air Balance Report Key	
Vendor:	Vendor Name				
Classroom ID / Area ID Number	Classroom / Area Type supplied	Actual Outside Air CFM (OA)	Occupancy (OA CFM / 15)	CFM	Cubic Foot per Minute
Main Office	Office	528.0	35	OA	Outside Air
101	Classroom	100.0	6	Occupancy	Number of people
103	Classroom	76.0	5	Formula to determine occupancy: $OA / 15CFM =$ Occupancy (number of people in a room)	
105	Classroom	238.0	15		
107	Classroom	70.0	4		

The column titled Actual Outside Air CFM (OA) is the sum of fresh air delivered through the HVAC system. The column titled Occupancy (OA CFM /15) reflects the maximum number of people who can be in the space at any given time before social distancing requirements are considered.

- ***What does a zero (0) mean in the occupancy column?*** A zero occupancy number means that the room will not be used for person-to-person instruction until a correction is made to the ventilation system or other means are implemented to bring in outside air. However, the room can be used for virtual teaching, meaning that a teacher can be in the classroom delivering instruction virtually to students who remain remote.
- ***What if a room isn't included in the report?*** If there is no outside air source in a room, such as a window or univent, then no Air Balance Test would have been conducted. In these instances, the room will be taken offline and will not be used for in-person learning.
- ***Is it safe to be in a school building that has rooms where fresh air flow is reported as zero?*** Improving air flow is just one of the many health and safety measures being put in place to support healthy school environments. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) recommends increasing ventilation of indoor spaces whenever possible as an additional safety step and not as a replacement for wearing masks, social distancing, frequent handwashing and other safety precautions. Here's a video in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) that highlights the many measures we are implementing in accordance with CDC and PDPH guidance.
- ***Does the report inform the Maximum Occupancy sign outside of each room?*** The Maximum Occupancy sign reflects either the occupancy as determined by the Air Balance Test or the occupancy needed to maintain social distancing requirements (calculated as the room's square footage divided by 44 sq. ft.), whichever is lower. Social distancing protocols will always apply.

You can find information, videos, guides and more on the District's webpage at [philasd.org/aes](https://philasd.org/aes). You can also track the status of other readiness efforts for our school by clicking on the green **Find Your School's Progress** button on the District's [Readiness Dashboard](#).

I will continue to keep you informed as more information is available. As always, please feel free to contact the school at 215-400-3050. We are all in this together, and my staff

and I are committed to supporting all of our Stephen Decatur students and families throughout this unprecedented school year. Please take care and be safe.

***Mrs. Genevieve Endy-O'Kane***