Paint and Plaster Stabilization Project
Questions and Answers

Paint and Plaster Stabilization is a term that describes the process of a qualified group of trained professionals performing the removal of loose, peeling, flaking and damaged paint and plaster under controlled conditions. The work is performed in accordance with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) rule. The purpose of the work is to minimize the risk of children’s exposure to lead-based paint while at school.

Question 1  Will you address major underlying issues prior to stabilizing specific areas? Specifically areas with water damage?

1. Answer  Major underlying issues will not be directly addressed through this paint and plaster stabilization project. There are routine processes in place for addressing underlying issues through the Building Engineer, the Maintenance Department’s work order system and through the Capital Planning processes. The School District has made available public reports on large capital needs for each school. For more information, please visit: https://www.philasd.org/capitalprograms/about/initiatives/facility-condition-assessment/

However, during our time (6-8 weeks) in the school we will work with Maintenance staff and other District representatives and consultants, while we are in the buildings, in an attempt to get a deeper understanding about, and scale, scope and location of the underlying root cause issues in the building that might create ongoing impacts on lead-painted surfaces. One of the approaches we will be using involves testing the paint for lead content on those surfaces we know and recognize to be locations where repetitive, ongoing deterioration has been taking place from any source.

Question 2  When will the schedule for the following week be sent to/shared with the teachers?

Answer 2  The School District hired a qualified environmental consultant to document the spaces in the building to be addressed and develop a scope. Based on that scope, work is being scheduled one week at a time. The schedule for the upcoming week will be available on Wednesdays and that schedule will be shared with the Philadelphia Federation of Teacher’s Health & Welfare Fund & Union’s Health and Safety Group (PFTH&WF/U H&S). While our general plan involves starting at the top of the building and moving downward this may vary based on input from the principal and/or school staff and dependent on logistics at the school. We will also try to take advantage of situations where rooms may be available for a period of time because of school trips or for other reasons.
Question 3  
Is the weekly schedule a live schedule during the week, as the work is being done? What if the work has to carry over into the next week?

Answer 3  
The upcoming week’s schedule will be sent on Wednesdays to the Principal and to a designated “point person” representative of the school School Advisory Council (SAC) or Home and School Association (HSA) any changes to the schedule will be shared on Fridays.

In the event that work is prolonged in a particular area or room the Principal will be notified early the next morning to help facilitate accommodating staff and students in another room. There will also be a foreman/supervisor on site throughout the project to help facilitate and ensure communication with the Principal.

Question 4  
Will you finish one project before you move on to the next? (i.e., if Thursday’s work winds up being more extensive than planned, will that work be finished on Friday, or will it be left to the end?)

Answer 4  
Work is planned to be fully completed in one area of the building prior to moving to another area of the building. If for some reason there is a delay in completing one area, the Principal will be notified (see answer above.)

Question 5  
It was stated in the presentation, under the ‘scope of work’ that specific places had water damage, who is the person in charge of ensuring all places that need work done get work done so there isn’t a problem in months (years) to come?

Answer 5  
The District recognizes that environmental conditions in schools such as signs of water damage are often the physical evidence of a bigger issue. Throughout this process the District's Environmental team will communicate needs and priorities to the Maintenance and Capital Divisions at schools included in the paint stabilization project.

Also, monitoring of water damaged walls and ceilings are conducted twice per year by an environmental inspector. Additionally, the school’s facilities staff will receive training on how to identify signs of moisture intrusion and what to do if paint and plaster become damaged in the future. Inspection and evaluation activities can be initiated by the Principal, Building Engineer, the Facility Area Coordinator (FAC), or by contacting either the District’s Office of Environmental Management & Services (OEMS) or the PFTH&WF/U H&S.

Question 6  
Can the water damage be fixed fully at the same time as the Paint and Plaster Stabilization Project?
Answer 6  The underlying causes of water damage will not be addressed through this paint and plaster stabilization project. However, as a result of our being in the school during the project period, any maintenance issues that we see and/or are brought to our attention, can be evaluated as part of the normal “work order” process and can be assigned and scheduled for repair or replacement as necessary. The data collected through routine inspections will be used to help prioritize repairs throughout the District.

Question 7  Can a new system be put in place to evaluate the number of cleaners needed based on the capacity of the school and the square footage of each individual school?

Answer 7  The current formula for evaluating the number of cleaners needed for a school is based upon the building’s square footage as per the School District’s collective bargaining agreement with SEIU 32BJ. Decisions to change the criteria for staff assignments must be done in partnership with the collective bargaining unit, SEIU 32BJ. The evaluation of cleaners needed based on the capacity of the school and the square footage of each individual school will be revisited at the next collective bargaining agreement contract negotiation.

Question 8  Have studies been done on the flaking plaster and paint, to see if there is lead in the samples?

Answer 8  While every school has not been tested for lead-based paint, all schools buildings built prior to 1978 are considered to contain lead-based paint and are treated as such. This is also consistent with the EPA’s position in which it is presumed that all buildings constructed prior to 1978 contain lead-based paint.

Question 9  Are the inspectors/environmental monitors from an outside company? Who exactly is confirming that the work is done and done properly?

Answer 9  A third party environmental consultant will confirm that the work is being completed in compliance with EPA’s lead safe work standards and procedures. The PFTH&WF/U H&S will conduct periodic and random site visits during and after the work has been completed to help ensure that the work is conducted safely and is also partnering with the District to conduct joint site visits. The EPA will also provide Lead RRP compliance assistance.

Question 10  What if there are reoccurrences?
Answer 10  Recurrences of paint and plaster damage will be monitored by facilities staff and environmental inspectors. There are processes in place for addressing recurrences through the Building Engineer and the Maintenance Department’s work order system.

Additionally, the Principal should be notified by anyone if they see damaged paint and plaster and she will contact the necessary people, so that the issue will be addressed early. Parent participation in major infrastructure planning may be facilitated by the school’s Principal when Capital improvements are scheduled for a school.

Teachers and faculty will also receive information, either through an in-service session and/or written materials to include:

- How to recognize potentially hazardous paint and/or plaster issues in the school;
- Procedures for reporting the problem and clearly defined timelines for remedy of the issue(s).

Question 11  How can you make it clear to parents that children need to get tested for lead, especially with the issues within the school?

Answer 11  A letter was sent home in students’ backpacks with contact information for the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Unit. Also, Public Health Centers provide children’s lead testing for free. The District will work through the school’s principal to share information with students’ families about lead testing for children.

Question 12  Will the paperwork be translated in all languages for every family?

Answer 12  Communications were provided in home languages as specified in the Parent Portal for the school.

Question 13  Who is the Point Person for the Principal?

Answer 13  Rhett Boykins, Maintenance Resource Scheduler, is the supervisor of the Paint and Plaster Stabilization Project.

Question 14  What defines a classroom?

Answer 14  The educational spaces where students learn typically range between 600 to 1,000 square feet. A classroom is considered to be a “functional space” in terms of the paint stabilization project. Functional space means a room, group of rooms, or homogeneous area (including crawl spaces or the space between a dropped ceiling and the floor or roof deck above), such as classroom(s), a cafeteria, gymnasium and hallway(s). All visible functional spaces were assessed for paint damage for this project.

Question 15  Above the tiles in the ceiling, is there paint with lead up there?
There may be lead-based paint present above the suspended ceiling tiles. Because the space above the suspended ceiling tiles is isolated from the classroom as a functional space, it is not being included in the paint and plaster stabilization project.

Spaces above the level of the drop ceiling but where there are no ceiling tiles in place (e.g. along the window walls in some areas) are being included in this project. Additionally, an Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Plan and approach will be implemented so that facilities staff are aware of the conditions associated with paint above the drop ceilings and can take appropriate measures to minimize the risk of occupant exposure and to engage in effective clean-up using HEPA-vacuuming and wet-wiping in the event that lead paint chips, dust and/or debris falls down.

**Question 16**  What is being done about the paint peeling on the ceiling above the tiles?

**Answer 16**  Paint above the suspended ceiling tiles is not being removed as part of this project. See answer above

**Question 17**  Who are the Environmental Consultants?

**Answer 17**  ● The Vertex Companies, Inc., 700 Turner Way, Aston PA, 19104
● Synertech, Inc., 228 Moore St, Philadelphia, PA 19148
● KEM, Inc., 835 Springdale Dr, Exton, PA 19341
● Criterion, Inc., 400 Street Rd, Bensalem, PA 19020

**Question 18**  Why did only Pre-K—1 get the EPA book?

**Answer 18**  The US Environmental Protection Agency requires that the District distribute the EPA pamphlet to the families of children age 6 years and under. Additional pamphlets are available in the Main Office. Additional pamphlets can be obtained at: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/renovaterightbrochure.pdf

**Question 19**  Can free lead testing be available for all children, since they are in a school with lead-based paint?

**Answer 19**  The Philadelphia Department of Public Health provides free lead testing at their Public Health Centers.

**Question 20**  Is a Mobile Lead Unit possible?

**Answer 20**  The District will not provide a mobile lead unit. Families should consult with their primary care physician about lead testing or contact The Philadelphia Department of Public Health for free lead testing at their Public Health Centers.
**Question 21**  Will you share the health & safety plan, weekly schedule, and the end results with the families?

**Answer 21** This information will be accessible to all in the Main Office. This information will also be provided to and shared with the PFTH&WF/U.

**Question 22**  When cleaning the damaged areas, is there asbestos in the plaster? Can it get airborne?

**Answer 22** The plaster was tested and is recorded in the school’s Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Management Plan as non-asbestos containing throughout the building, with the exception of the auditorium ceiling. The auditorium ceiling is assumed to contain asbestos because it has not been tested (very high ceiling). Any areas determined to contain asbestos will be handled in compliance with all city, state and federal regulatory requirements.

**Question 23**  Can Lead Sampling Wipes be available for every teacher, after their room has been cleaned?

**Answer 23** No. A testing plan was developed jointly with the PFTH&WF/U H&S. The EPA RRP verification testing method will be used as well as a quantitative testing procedure. The District will coordinate with the PFT to involve stakeholders in demonstrating the validity of the testing methods.

**Question 24**  Will Air Quality tests be done after the lead has been cleaned up and the space has been painted?

**Answer 24** Air quality testing for lead will not be conducted in association with this project because there is not a significant risk of airborne exposures given the work practices and procedures being employed. Lead dust testing is conducted on surfaces. Air quality testing for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) after areas have been painted is not planned at this time.

**Question 25**  How will the staff (and parents) know that the room is actually safe for children? Will the Consultant Inspectors be there every night to sign off on the work that is being done?

**Answer 25** Third party environmental consultant inspectors will assess and verify that spaces are safe for re-occupancy prior to releasing spaces back to the school. To support this effort, the EPA will conduct a compliance assistance inspection for the first few weeks of the project. The PFTH&WF/U H&S will also conduct independent assessments.

**Question 26**  What additional administration support can be offered to the Principal and the teaching staff during this Project?
Answer 26  The District believes that there is an appropriate project management structure in place to successfully complete the work. The Principal will have the contact information for the supervisor and that individual will also coordinate with the building engineer and there will be support from the District on communication to both parents and staff.

The Principal will have the contact information for the Maintenance Supervisor and that individual will also coordinate with the Building Engineer. The Office of Family and Community Engagement will provide support on communication to both parents and staff.

Question 27  Can the Roles & Responsibilities of everyone involved be given out before the work has started?

Answer 27  Key Team Members:

- **Francine Locke**, District’s Environmental Director, will direct the paint and plaster stabilization program from school selection criteria to final clearance testing, to ensure that the program complies with all applicable regulations, best management practices and District standards.

- **Jerry Junod**, District’s Environmental Manager, will manage the environmental consultant’s work for the District.

- **Jerry Roseman**, PFTH&WF/U H&S’ Director of Environmental Science & Occupational Safety & Health, will conduct site assessments to ensure that the District is performing the work according to shared understandings.

- **Paul Ruge, the Compliance Assistance Inspector from the EPA**, will conduct field assessments to help ensure that the work complies with the EPA Lead RRP rule.

- **Paul Bonewicz**, Maintenance Department’s Assistant Director of Operations, will update the weekly work schedule and email the schedule on Wednesdays to the Principal, PFT and SAC/HSA.

- **Project Supervisor**, Maintenance Department, will oversee the Painting staff who are performing the stabilization work. He will communicate with the Principal to coordinate the phasing of the project through the building.

- **Project Foreman**, Maintenance Department, will be the day to day communication point of contact for the Principal.

- **Third Party Environmental Consultant** will oversee the project from a regulatory compliance standpoint to ensure that lead safe work practices are used according to the EPA RRP rule. They will conduct Lead RRP verification testing after each space is completed by the Painting staff, update the scope of work spreadsheet on a daily basis to note which areas have been completed, and provide a final report when the overall project is completed in its entirety.

- **District’s Facility Area Coordinator** will supervise the building operations staff.

- **District’s Family Engagement Liaison** will work with school parents and the School Advisory Council to ensure that all concerns are answered by the
District.

- **Principal and Building Engineer** are key team members for on site coordination and communication about the project for teachers and student families.

**Question 28**  It was suggested that the Principal & the Point Person meet face to face before the Paint & Plaster Stabilization Project begins, even before the Kickoff meeting if possible

**Answer 28**  Prior to the work beginning, Rhett Boykin will meet with the Principal and point person to provide information about the schedule and scope of work planned for each week.

**Question 29**  What plan will be put in place after the Project is done, as a proactive approach from the District to keep this from happening again?

**Answer 29**  Monitoring of water damaged walls and ceilings will be conducted twice per year by an environmental inspector. Additionally, the school’s facilities staff will receive training on how to identify signs of moisture intrusion and what to do if paint and plaster become damaged in the future. Also refer to answers above.

**Question 30**  Will an abatement ever happen?

**Answer 30**  There are no plans to perform lead abatement at this time.

**Question 31**  Can the paint be the same color as the rest of the wall?

**Answer 31**  Paint will be matched with existing paint colors where possible.

**Question 32**  Are the safety plans that Operations has to follow available for all to see?

**Answer 32**  The Paint and Plaster Stabilization Plan and Procedures will be accessible to all in the Main Office and emailed to a designated person from the SAC and/or HSA.

**Question 33**  Does school custodial staff have the masks and equipment needed to clean up the lead-based paint & plaster?

**Answer 33**  All necessary personal protective equipment will be provided. High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtered vacuums will be provided and they will have all necessary equipment and materials for wet-wiping surfaces.

**Question 34**  Is there an Asbestos and Lead Paint Assessment done? Can the Principal, SAC, HSA get access to the documentation?

**Answer 34**  Asbestos reports for every school are available on the District’s website at https://www.philasd.org/capitalprograms/programsservices/environmental/ahera/. The lead paint scope of work will be provided to the Principal and shared during the kick off meeting.
Question 35  It was stated that the assessment is done twice a year, and getting the documentation sent out will be looked into. How often will inspectors from EPA and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers be inspecting the work?

Answer 35  The indoor environmental quality assessment is conducted in coordination with the asbestos inspections for every school. This information is shared with the PFT as it becomes available. The EPA and PFT are able to inspect the work at their convenience.

Question 36  What is the process for alerting the school district about issues that need further attention?

Answer 36  Issues that need further attention should be reported to the principal and building engineer. The building engineer is required to enter work orders if the issues cannot be remediated locally at the school-based level.

Question 37  What role are the janitorial staff playing in the clean up? How can we protect them?

Answer 37  The facilities staff will conduct a thorough post-cleaning of classrooms after the paint and plaster stabilization work is completed and the work areas are tested and released for re-occupancy.

Question 38  Can the district ensure that decisions will be made jointly with the involvement of all stakeholders - PFTH&WF/U H&S, Building Staff, Parents, Advocacy Groups (Philly Healthy Schools Coalition) and District managers.

Answer 38  Yes.

Question 39  In information about childhood lead poisoning it says there is risk from both "inhaling or ingesting" so we should be concerned about lead dust in the classroom air?

Answer 39  Only manual processes will be used to stabilize paint and plaster. This method minimizes any airborne lead concerns.

Question 40  How can we make sure the area is clear before children are in the space?

Answer 40  A third party environmental assessor will provide final verification of spaces prior to returning them back to building occupants.

Question 41  Will a room (ie: Room 105) be vacated for entirety of work?

Answer 41  Work areas will be vacated for the entirety of an active stabilization project.

Question 42  Can we feel confident that the work is done correctly and will floor mats be in place?
Answer 42  The work is being monitored by a third party environmental consultant to ensure that lead safe work practices are used during the project. Final verification testing will be conducted in each work area to ensure that there is no residual paint or plaster dust or debris present on surfaces. The EPA and PFT are also providing support through independent site assessments to ensure that the work is performed correctly.

- All surfaces are wet-wiped and HEPA-vacuumed
- Surfaces being stabilized are misted during work to keep dust down
- Only hand scraping and non-power tools are used
- Plastic sheeting is used to cover furnishings, fixtures and materials
- Areas will be isolated to ensure no dust or debris leaves the work area while work is conducted
- Walk-off mats/pads will be used to help ensure dust is not tracked out of work areas
- Multiple levels of review and inspection will be applied
- A testing strategy will be employed

Question 43  Why are we doing this work now?

Answer 43  The District worked closely with the PFTH&WF/U H&S to assess school conditions related to lead-based paint and to develop a detailed assessment and evaluation approach for comprehensive school inspection and work scope development. The District collected inspection data about damaged paint & plaster conditions via third party environmental inspections. The data indicated that there is paint and plaster damage in schools built prior to 1978. This project was initiated to reduce the risk of children being exposed to lead-based paint in school.

Question 44  Can we obtain qualifications of workers?

Answer 44  All of the workers are qualified as certified US EPA Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting workers. To view their certificates, please contact the Office of Environmental Management and Services at flocke@philasd.org.

Question 45  What happens if someone is sick? Will only qualified workers be allowed to perform work?

Answer 45  Only qualified, licensed EPA Lead RRP painters will perform this work.

Question 46  There is no mention that sanding will not occur in the "Dec 2017 work procedures". Will sanding be part of the process and how will workers minimize the dust?
Answer 46 Sanding will not be a part of this process. Dust will be minimized by using manual processes for scraping, water spray and local exhaust ventilation (HEPA vacuums).

Question 47 What is the plan if teachers/parents/staff observe before school starts that the work is not done correctly the night before?

Answer 47 Teachers/parents/staff should notify the principal or building engineer immediately if they observe that work was not done correctly the night before and request for a relocation of their classroom. The Project Supervisor from the Maintenance Department will then be contacted to address the issue.

Question 48 Since the project is scheduled to go on for 4-6 weeks, how will parents and staff be updated throughout? Is someone inspecting the work daily?

Answer 48 The work is inspected daily by a third party environmental consultant. Parents and staff can receive status updates throughout the project by designating a point of contact for the SAC and/or HSA. The District will share updates at start, midway and at the completion of the project. The school should send an email to capitalprograms@philasd.org with the name of the designated individual. The work performed will be inspected daily by the Maintenance Foreman as well as the third party environmental consultant. Additionally, The PFTH&WF/U H&S will be working in close coordination with the District on this project as described above and is able to also provide updates and related information.

Question 49 How often will inspectors from EPA and the Federation of Teachers be inspecting the work?

Answer 49 The EPA will provide compliance assistance inspections for a limited period of time at the start of the project. The PFTH&WF/U H&S will inspect work areas for the duration of the project at any given time.

Question 50 What is the process for alerting the school district about issues that need further attention?

Answer 50 Parents and teachers should alert their school’s building engineer or principal if there are any issues that need attention.

Question 51 What role are the janitorial staff playing in the clean up? How can we protect them?

Answer 51 Pre- and post-cleaning will be conducted by custodial staff. Staff will receive training about safe work practices and procedures including any necessary personal protective equipment.

Question 52 What is the process for identifying further lead issues after this initial work is completed?
Answer 52  Monitoring of paint condition will be conducted during 6-month inspections by environmental consultants. Building engineers will receive training on how to identify and respond to recurring paint damage.

Question 53  Can the district ensure that decisions will be made jointly with the involvement of all stakeholders - Building Staff, Parents, PFTH&WF/U H&S, Advocacy Groups (Philly Healthy Schools Coalition) AND District managers.

Answer 53  The District will ensure that decisions are made jointly with stakeholders.

Question 54  Will the school district provide faculty and parents with the health and safety plan before work begins?

Answer 54  The paint and plaster stabilization work plan and procedure will be shared with the principal and a designated individual from the SAC and/or Home and School Association.