

Paint and Plaster Stabilization Frequently Asked Questions

The School District of Philadelphia has launched a paint and plaster stabilization project at forty (40) schools with the goal of reducing the risk of students' exposure to lead paint. Below are frequently asked questions developed in partnership with parents that provide information about this effort. The full set of Q&A's and more information about the project can be found at: www.philasd.org/facilities.

Q1: How were schools selected for the paint and plaster stabilization project?

A1: Schools selected for this project were built prior to 1978, and have the greatest quantity and severity of damaged lead paint as identified by qualified environmental inspectors. Priority was given to building with children age six or younger.

Q2: What is paint stabilization? How will students be protected during this work?

A2: Paint stabilization involves removing loose, peeling, flaking and crumbling paint and plaster under controlled conditions. To ensure that lead-safe work practices are used. The work will be performed by US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) certified District painters and contractors.

Q3: Will stabilization work take place while students and staff are in the school?

A3: All stabilization work will occur during the evenings and when staff and students are not in classrooms.

Q4: What can school communities expect to see during this work?

A4: Work areas will be isolated and notifications will be posted outside. Objects inside the areas will be covered with plastic sheeting. Students may be relocated to other classrooms for a day or more during the project. After loose, peeling and crumbling paint is removed, a finish coat of fresh paint will be applied to cover walls and ceilings in their entirety. A general housekeeping cleaning will take place after the stabilization work is completed. No area will be returned to the school for occupancy until there is documentation that test results and EPA standards are acceptable.

Q5: How will the work be monitored to ensure that it is completed using lead-safe work practices?

A5: An environmental consultant will oversee all paint and plaster stabilization work to ensure compliance with the EPA RRP regulations. While painters are in the building, staff from the District and the PFT will conduct joint inspections to monitor compliance. A District project manager and foreman will coordinate daily with school-based staff and contractors. Weekly and/or bi-weekly meetings will be scheduled at each school to discuss work progress, the project schedule and coordination.

Q6: What testing will be used to make sure spaces are safe?

A6: For all work areas, the EPA RRP Verification Test wipe method will be used to confirm that a space is free of lead dust and safe for re-occupancy. For Pre-K, K and 1st Grade classrooms, the District will use up to three testing methods to confirm that a space is free of lead dust and safe for re-occupancy. This includes the EPA RRP Verification Test wipe method, a colorimetric wipe and a Flame Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometry (FAAS) test.

Q7: What will District Facilities staff need to do to support the stabilization work?

A7: School-based Facilities staff will be supported by additional Facilities staff to help remove all materials attached to classroom walls. The materials will be boxed and labeled for safe storage until completion of the project. Closets will be emptied if they are on the scope of work and items will be boxed, labeled and stored until the area is complete. Classroom furniture will be placed in the hallway or, if furniture remains in a space, it will be moved to the center and covered with plastic. General cleaning will continue as scheduled after the stabilization work is completed. Facilities staff will arrange the classroom furniture back to its original configuration.

Q8: Can School Advisory Councils, Home and School Associations and other stakeholders help with the project?

A8: Volunteers can support paint stabilization work by coordinating with their school's principal. There may be opportunities for volunteers to help teachers declutter classrooms and closets and to help remove wall hangings. This will be determined on a school-by-school basis through the principal.

Q9: What type of cleaning will take place by Facilities staff after the stabilization work is completed?

A9: Facilities staff will perform a thorough cleaning after stabilization work is completed. This includes wiping walls and horizontal ledges and classroom furniture. Floors will be scrubbed and re-waxed as needed.

Q10: How will school staff and stakeholders know when the project will start and when the work will be completed?

A10: Teachers, staff and students' families will receive notifications throughout all phases of the project. A letter will be sent home with students notifying families of the project and a kick-off meeting will be held at the school. A detailed work scope will be available in the Main Office and provided to a SAC designee. Weekly schedules will be emailed to the Principal and SAC designee. A letter will be sent home to families notifying them that the stabilization work is complete.

Q11: Where can school communities learn about the project taking place at their school and who can they contact if they want to ask questions?

A11: For more information visit www.philasd.org/facilities; or email paint@philasd.org .