

A Message To Our Philadelphia Community

The vision of The School District of Philadelphia is for all children to have access to a great school close to where they live. Part of how we must define a great school is a safe and healthy learning environment where educators can do their best work and our students can learn at their highest levels without concerns about environmental safety. To support environmental safety for every student and staff member in every school, the School District of Philadelphia will:

- thoroughly review and strengthen our environmental safety processes and practices, and openly share our improvement plan with you -- our valued students, staff, families and Philadelphia community
- engage our Philadelphia community in a deeper and more meaningful conversation about the presence of asbestos, lead and other potential environmental concerns in our buildings, and what we can do together to better support student and staff safety
- have candid conversations about the capacity of our existing operations resources, and the additional resources we will need to more proactively identify areas of concern and increase our responsiveness when we do
- proactively engage staff and families as partners to help develop contingency plans when needed
- provide regular, transparent communications about all major school construction projects
- continue to provide every SDP engineer with Asbestos Awareness Training so they know how to identify and properly report areas of concern in our schools -- and expand the training to all facilities and maintenance personnel and key school staff
- continue to conduct comprehensive visual inspections of each school twice per year to further identify and address issues
- continue to make available on our website information about the environmental conditions of our schools, including the full Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Report issued every three years and expand information to include all environmental testing results
- continue to conduct environmental testing, in compliance with the Philadelphia Department of Health, after completing every construction job to ensure the area is safe for re-occupancy

In the coming weeks and months, I'll be sharing more about our District-wide plan to improve how we support safe and healthy schools. We are committed to providing all students with learning environments that inspire creativity and help prepare them for bright futures, and we will do it with safety as our top priority. I look forward to engaging our staff, families, students and the entire Philadelphia community in this important work.

Sincerely,

William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent