



## **Pomperaug District Department of Health**

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November 30, 2015

**Dr. Ana Ortiz  
Superintendent of Schools  
Town of Oxford  
1 Great Hill Road  
Oxford, CT 06478**

**RE: Odor Complaints / Follow-up Oxford Center School**

Dear Dr. Ortiz,

Pursuant to complaints received from parents of students, attending the outbuildings at Oxford Center School, I can report the following:

- A. The Pomperaug Health District inspected the outbuildings several times in the past year including 6/3, 11/5, 11/13 and 11/24/15. The basic complaints were moldy/musty odors in the outbuilding (1-8) with the major focus on building 1.
- B. The initial visit of June 3, 2015 did indicate presence of mold like odors at entrance to building one with no significant odors in building 2-7.
- C. Discussions with building supervisor, John Barlow, in June, indicated that all the outbuildings were being "sanitized" with ozone and hydrogen peroxide to reduce mold and mold-like odors, along with some structural renovation.
- D. Discussion with Mr. Barlow in early fall indicated that problems remained in outbuilding 1 that would require additional renovation, including removal of floor tile and resurfacing of floors. The building was to be unoccupied in this process of renovation.
- E. The health director, Neal Lustig, and sanitarian, Mona LaBissoniere, along with key Oxford School staff, conducted a site inspection on November 5, 2015. Marian Heyman, coordinator for the Indoor Environmental Quality Unit, CT Dept of Public Health, accompanied the site inspection team. The results of that inspection indicated the presence of "mold-like odors" along with strong chemical odors from recently repainted concrete floors. Additionally, the group walked through all the remaining outbuildings and assessed the air quality, movement and odors in each building. (See Marian Heyman report attached.)

- F. On November 13, 2015 the Pomperaug Health District revisited the outbuildings and the mold/musty odor had returned. The chemical "paint" odor was no longer noticeable. The remaining outbuildings were inspected for presence of "mold odors" and none were observed. Those outbuildings where the air handling system was actively working (running), were observed to be fresher, with less "background" odors. Mr. Barlow stated that building one was not going to be occupied and students would eventually be moved into the newer "building 8" at the southeast corner of the Center School property.
- G. On November 24, 2015, on-site inspection was completed on "Building 8" and the air handling system was operating properly and no significant deleterious odors were observed.

#### Summary

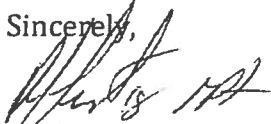
The recent series of parental complaints are part of a much longer period of indoor air issues at the Oxford Center School outbuildings. We have documentation of these problems going back to 1998. In the 2003-2005 time period, substantial improvements were made to the ventilation systems at the Oxford Center School outbuildings. This included the installation of 2 hvac systems on each building and forced air circulation. The Health District concurs with the decision to not reoccupy outbuilding one, in that all actions thus far have not been able to fix the "moldy odor" situation. Based on medical and odor complaints from parents, we believe this to be the proper solution for this point in time. A key point in regards to indoor "mold" odors.

- A. The presence of water damage, visible mold, or mold odors on a history of water damage provides a more reliable indicator of dampness- or mold related health risks than quantitative microbiologic assessments (air testing for mold).

We strongly recommend that the ventilation systems in the remaining outbuildings be adjusted to allow for continuous operation of air handling mechanisms. This will allow for the constant removal of "stagnant" air and replacement with fresh outside air. The walk through of the newer "building 8" indicated no issue with "mold" odors and the environment appeared suitable for classroom usage.

The Pomperaug Health District will continue to monitor and revisit the indoor air situation at the request of Oxford Public Schools when requested. Additionally, we will respond to parental complaints in the future. Any questions with the above, please call me at 203-264-9616.

Sincerely,



Neal Lustig, Director of Health

Enclosure

Cc: George Temple, First Selectman