

FALL RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"The Scholarship City"

417 Rock Street, Fall River, MA 02720

Meg Mayo-Brown, Superintendent

Dear Talbot Families and Staff,

Beginning Monday, September 19, 2011 we are temporarily closing Talbot Middle School to conduct environmental testing. We anticipate Talbot will remain closed through Thursday, September 22, 2011. The remainder of this letter provides important information related to the need for school closure and testing.

Student safety remains our first and highest priority. As a result of the recent events at Westport Middle School, we initiated testing for PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls) at Talbot Middle School and BMC Durfee High School. These two buildings were selected for testing because their construction occurred when the use of PCBs was permitted, particularly in window caulking. It is important to note that in 1976, Congress banned the manufacture and use of PCBs. Our other school buildings were either built before or after the commercial use of PCBs, so the buildings were not identified for testing.

In order to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff, we wanted to determine whether or not PCBs were present in either Durfee High School or Talbot Middle School. The district had an independent environmental testing company gather samples of caulk from both schools. Samples were gathered from both interior caulking, as well as caulking around exterior doors and windows. The test results from the samples at Durfee High School indicate PCBs are not present in the caulking. However, samples from the Talbot Middle School indicate the construction company most likely used several different types of caulk, and that the caulk contained PCBs.

To determine if any of the PCBs from the caulking materials are present in the air inside Talbot Middle School, environmental testing companies have advised us to conduct an air quality test. In order for the PCBs to be present in the air, the caulking material would have to deteriorate and become small enough to become airborne through dust particles fine enough to remain in the air. When testing is completed, we will release the results to the community and discuss next steps with city officials, the Fall River School Committee and Talbot stakeholders. At this point, we can say that the Talbot school has caulking that does contain PCBs. The air quality testing will give us more information about the existence of it outside its solid form. We will communicate those results when we receive them. Next steps will depend on those results. We

will work with the local, State and Federal authorities to insure any mitigation and repairs are done in compliance with the authorities and regulations.

Beginning Monday, September 19, 2011, an environmental testing company will conduct testing on air samples to see if PCBs exist in a level that exceed the EPA guidelines. The samples that are gathered during the testing process are sent to a laboratory with results available in 48-72 hours. We expect that we will receive results for Talbot Middle School by Thursday, September 22, 2011.

Talbot families are invited to an informational meeting to learn more about the testing process and ask questions of district staff. The meeting will be held at Kuss Middle School, Monday, September 19, at 6:00 pm. We will continue to provide updates via the Talbot School website (www.fallriverschools.org/talbot.cfm) and Channel 17. A Frequently Asked Questions Guide, published by the EPA is available on the Talbot website and we will have copies available tomorrow night at the district meeting.

If you need immediate information, please contact my office at 508-675-8420 x404. We look forward to seeing families tomorrow night and thank you for your support and patience through this process.

Sincerely,

Meg Mayo Brown, Superintendent of Schools