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Toxic find sparks Stuy HS dust-up

By CARL CAMPANILE
Education Reporter

Stuyvesant HS's ventilation system has captured concentrations of lead — believed to be from the World Trade Center collapse — that are 30 times higher than acceptable federal limits, recent Board of Education tests found.

It's the first time school officials have tested the school's ventilation system.

But the same round of tests found negligible levels of lead-laden dust inside the school.

A parent leader said the results from the classroom ventilators are cause for alarm because they could be released into classes. Exposure to lead dust can cause irreversible brain, nervous-system and organ damage.

"We have extremely high levels of lead throughout the ventilation system," said Mari-lena Christodoulou, former Stuyvesant Parent Association president.

"What's outrageous is

that the Board of Education knew about this situation since October. Our students have been exposed to this for nine months."

Christodoulou also accused the board of refusing to release the data until she threatened legal action — a claim denied by school officials.

The Environmental Protection Agency deems levels of lead above 40 micrograms per square foot as unacceptable for children under the age of 6.

The average readings of lead in Stuyvesant's 300 classroom-ventilation units was 1,174.89 micrograms — nearly 30 times higher.

Levels of lead in other parts of the school, such as hallways and the gym, were much lower — an average of 89 micrograms per square foot.

Christodoulou said parents will continue to press their demand for school officials to do a better job cleaning the ventilation units and to install more stringent filters to prevent lead from entering the school.

"This is a potential health hazard," said Howard Bader, an environmental consultant hired by the Parent Association.

He stopped short of calling on the board to close Stuyvesant with just two weeks left in the session.

Schools Chancellor Harold Levy's office insisted Stuyvesant is safe and blasted parents' use of the data as irresponsible.

"This is disingenuous and specious," said Levy spokeswoman Catie Marshall. "They're making noise about something that is not causing environmental problems in the school."

"The ventilation systems are supposed to trap the dust. The lead is not inside the building. It is physically inside the ventilation system in the wall. None of this stuff is getting inside the building."

**Mayor defends
small WTC
memorial / P. 17**

Neal Travis



Venus, Serena & Wim

THE people who run Wimbledon are sitting down today to do the draw for the world's most prestigious tennis tournament and are facing a real dilemma. How should they rank **Venus** and **Serena Williams**?

The question is fraught with potential scandal because the Williams sisters are ranked — and clearly deserve to be — No. 1 and No. 2 in the world and should, if everything goes to form, face each other in the final of the Wimbledon tourney, which starts a week from Monday.

But there is a widespread conspir-

atorial notion that the sisters' autocratic father, **Richard**, decides which girl wins when they go head to head. Thus, Serena beat Venus in the French Open, so it's Venus' turn at Wimbledon, if you believe the conspiracy-mongers.

In all the other majors seeding goes by ranking, but Wimbledon reserves the royal privilege of deciding its own pecking order and could arrange things this year to insure the Williams-Williams clash doesn't happen.

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That's Al, folks

IT looks like **Al Gore** is moving to seize the day and establish himself as the front-running Democratic presidential candidate for 2004. Al's hosting a weekend retreat in Memphis at the end of this month and is expected to tell the faithful that he is ready and eager to run again. Lord knows, the Dems better coalesce behind someone pretty soon because **Dubya Bush** is campaigning hard and smartly already, visiting state after key state to shore up his reelection. Gore, in another move that indicates his decision to run again, is also setting up a New York evening to thank his past supporters.

Jacko legal tracko

RECORD industry buzz has **Michael Jackson** teaming up with **Johnnie Cochran** to maybe sue **Tommy Motola**, Sony Music and entertainment lawyer **Allen Grub-**

man. The facts are pretty hairy to do with the vast advances son in deals that were handled by **man**. The Beatles songbook for Sony, apparently forced Jacko for the advances. Jackson **Paul McCartney** and **me** whereby the former Beatle mess in return for Jacko re turning it over to Paul.

Party headquarters

THE word is the Democrats ready somewhat embarrassed **Bill Clinton's** presidential bid to build a dazzling new HQ in the building next door to the combine the two, saving at least can better be used for getting