

PRESS RELEASE**Contact:****Concerned Stuyvesant Parents****Paul L. Edwards, Media Committee, 212-254-1069****August 7th, 2002****ASBESTOS FOUND DURING STUYVESANT HIGH SCHOOL CLEANUP****Problems with lead tests also raise concern**

NEW YORK — Extremely high levels of asbestos have been found in the auditorium of Stuyvesant High School. Tests of the carpeting reveal asbestos levels that are more than 250 times the normal background levels expected in New York City.

The test results, which have not been released by the Stuyvesant High School Parents' Assn., which paid for the analysis, or the Board of Education, were obtained by Concerned Stuyvesant Parents, an independent parents' group.

A thorough environmental cleanup of the ventilation systems at Stuyvesant is now in progress, following the release in June of lead test data that showed the ducts and unit ventilators in the school were heavily contaminated with lead. However, a consultant under contract to the Parents' Assn. has indicated that some of the follow-up testing now underway is being conducted improperly and should be repeated.

Concerned Stuyvesant Parents is particularly troubled by the finding of significant asbestos levels, considering that the school underwent an asbestos abatement following the September 11th collapse of the World Trade Center and before students returned to class on October 9th.

Using an ultrasonication test that is recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency, asbestos levels of as much as 2.5 million structures per square centimeter were found in one sample. A second sample revealed 60,000 structures/cm². Although no formal EPA standard exists for this test, environmental experts generally consider any finding up to 10,000 structures/cm² to be a normal background level. Readings up to 100,000 structures/cm² are considered cause for concern. And experts say that levels found in excess of 100,000 structures/cm² should be abated.

Additionally, Howard Bader, the consultant on retainer to the Parents' Assn., has stated that on related WTC related projects, levels in excess of 10,000 are currently triggering abatement.

Although the Board of Education had been planning on removing the carpet from the auditorium prior to these findings, no such replacement was planned for the auditorium's upholstered seats or curtains. Concerned Stuyvesant Parents is now demanding a complete asbestos abatement for the auditorium. Additionally, CSP is asking that other areas of the building that contain carpets or curtains be tested and an abatement performed if necessary.

Concerned Stuyvesant Parents is especially troubled that the presence of asbestos has been detected only after the completion of the school year. Before classes resumed in the building on October 9th, parents had been assured by the Board of Education that the building had been thoroughly cleaned. Only later did parents learn that the ventilation ducts had never been cleaned. Later still was the revelation that the classroom ventilators had also never been cleaned.

Then came the finding that the ventilation systems were heavily contaminated with lead. And now, only because parents independently paid for the tests, has asbestos been found. Along the way, the Parents' Assn. retained a lawyer on a *pro bono* basis -- Stuyvesant alumnus Richard Ben Veniste, now of Mayer, Brown, Row & Maw in Washington, D.C. -- and was preparing to sue the Board of Education before it acquiesced and agreed to clean the school over the summer.

For these reasons, Concerned Stuyvesant Parents is also demanding that upon completion of all scheduled work, an independent contractor perform a complete suite of environmental tests on the school to assure the entire Stuyvesant Community that the building is safe.

Concerned Stuyvesant Parents is an independent group of parents that have joined together to work on academic, environmental and other issues that are of concern to the entire Stuyvesant High School community.

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