



**NYC Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Public Affairs
59-17 Junction Blvd., 19th Floor
Corona, NY 11368**

FAX COVER SHEET

Date: 8/7

To: Mike Gelsman

Fax #: 4454

From: Charlie Stucker

Ph #: _____

of Pages Including Cover Sheet: 4

Comments: _____

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.

AUG-07-2002 16:00
AUG-07-2002 16:00

NYC D.E.P. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

P.02/04

Released by Parents Association

PRESS RELEASE - STUY HIGH ASBESTOS SKY HIGH

released today

Two and a half million structures of asbestos per square centimeter were found in the carpet of the auditorium of Stuyvesant High School in tests completed Friday. Normal background levels in an urban environment are considered to be 10,000 structures per sq cm.

The Parents' Association engineer conducted two tests for asbestos in the carpet of the auditorium which was being replaced for aesthetic reasons, the Parents' Association said. One test came back at 60,000 structures, six times the expected background level, the other at two and a half million structures or 250 times the expected background level. Parents believe the asbestos may have been tracked in by workers and dogs who used the auditorium as a base during rescue operations at Ground Zero. It could also have resulted from the initial collapse of the towers or from the barge operation which sat at Stuyvesant's north doorstep for eight months during the cleanup.

The tests were conducted during a cleanup of the ventilation system after lead was discovered there at thirty times the regulatory limit. Although the Board of Education had assured parents and staff that the school had undergone a thorough asbestos abatement after September 11, several months later the Stuyvesant community learned that the ventilation system had not been cleaned. The Board of Education continued to refuse to clean it, despite the fact that FEMA was paying, until the Parents' Association threatened litigation.

"The news about the asbestos makes us doubt the tests the Board of Education's company has been doing all year," said one parent.

Other parents expressed concern for the workers who have not been wearing protective gear as well as concern about the environmental impact of the monumental rebuilding process on their children.

Jenna Orkin -

PII

> parents Assoc. member

from the engineer's report:

I received the ultrasonication test results for the Auditorium carpet from EMSL Analytical today. Both are extremely high (approximately 10,000 and 2.5 million asbestos structures per square centimeter). I will fax a copy of the results to each of you. Levels greater than 10,000 are currently triggering abatement for WTC related projects. Surprisingly the highest value was from under a seat in the rear of the Auditorium (below the Mezzanine). This certainly raises concern that the seats are contaminated. IOE should adequately sample (ASTM Microvac) the seats to determine if cleaning is feasible. If the seats are not replaced, extensive sampling should be performed after cleaning and prior to occupancy. Similar consideration should be given to replacing and/or testing the 6th floor library carpeting.

TO: Nathalie Miller

PII

From: Leticia Hedrick
WNYC
(212) 669-3358
FAX: (212) 669-3828

Time

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.

* * *