

Mike Miles  
Superintendent of Schools



*Educating All Students For Success*

To: All Parents/Guardians of Urban Park Elementary Students

From: Angie Torres, Principal

Date: October 29, 2012

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Dear Parents and Teachers,

At the end of the day on October 26, 2012, we were informed by health agencies of a possible mercury spill that happened on October 17, 2012 near Room 207 at Urban Park Elementary School.


The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Toxicology Service learned of this incident after the hospitalization of an Urban Park student, along with his/her siblings, with symptoms related to mercury exposure. The child and siblings had been playing with a large amount of liquid mercury in their home and they stated that a small amount of the substance had been brought to the school after-hours on October 17<sup>th</sup> and spilled near Room 207.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was immediately involved and a team from the EPA and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) tested the school on the evening of October 26<sup>th</sup>. They found low-level mercury contamination in limited locations of the school. The school was closed and thoroughly cleaned by professional environmental contractors over the weekend. The officials of the EPA have advised the school that the indoor air levels of mercury are now safe. The classrooms on the second floor of the school will remain closed as a precaution during further cleaning activities, until the EPA staff has determined they can safely be reopened for students. The mercury is not currently a health hazard to students or staff who attend Urban Park, as per the health-based recommendations of the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

Health experts at the UT Southwestern Medical Toxicology service, the North Texas Poison Center, and the ATSDR have advised that *no* health effects for students, family members, or teachers are expected from the October 17<sup>th</sup> incident at the school, based on the indoor air testing results, short duration of exposure, and limited number of locations where the mercury was detected.

You are welcome to attend a meeting with health and environmental experts which will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 6pm in the auditorium of Urban Park to help answer your questions and keep you informed. If you cannot attend the meeting, or have questions before the meeting, the **Texas Poison Center Network** is available 24/7 with bilingual staff to provide consultation to any concerned parents, and can be contacted at: **1-800-222-1222**.

Sincerely,

  
Principal,  
Urban Park Elementary



Dear Parents of Urban Park Students in fourth and fifth grades:

This letter is to give you additional information about the mercury cleanup that is going on at our school.

*As a safety measure*, the shoes you child wore to school today were tested by health officials and were not found to have any mercury. If your child may have worn a different pair of shoes to school on or after October 17<sup>th</sup>, please follow the below instructions and have your child bring those shoes to school tomorrow in a plastic bag, so that they can be tested.

We are asking that students and family members who may have been in or near Room 207 on or after October 17<sup>th</sup> to bring their shoes back to the school for mercury testing.

What to do:

- Put each pair of shoes in its own plastic garbage bag. Seal it by tying it in a knot.
- Label the bag with your child's name, their teacher's name and your phone number.
- Bring it to the front office at Urban Park Elementary School on Monday October 28<sup>th</sup> or Tuesday October 29<sup>th</sup>. We will be storing and testing these shoes.
- After testing, we will call you to let you know if your shoes have any mercury left on them. Shoes without any mercury will be returned to you. Shoes that have mercury on them will be safely thrown away.

Professional environmental contractors have been conducting ongoing cleaning and airing out of the school. Tests that were done after the weekend cleanup show that indoor air levels at the school are now safe. As a precaution, all the students in fourth and fifth grade on the second floor of the new wing have been relocated for a couple of days to allow time for the cleanup efforts to conclude.

If you would like more information, the Texas Poison Center Network is available to provide consultation to any concerned parents, and can be contacted at: 1-800-222-1222.

Sincerely,

Principal,  
Urban Park Elementary School