

JOINT RELEASE:
Greenwich Board of Education * Town of Greenwich * GHS-MISA Building Committee
Greenwich, CT

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GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING UPDATE

GHS Fields Remain Closed Until Further Notice
Surface Soil Sampling shows PCBs levels above the most stringent residential cleanup
Standard on or near GHS field #2, #3, #4, and #5
Soil Sampling Program continuing

Review of current status: *In mid July 2011, during the course of the excavation work for the Greenwich High School Music Instructional Space and Auditorium (MISA) project, unexpected soil conditions were discovered in the West (or back) parking lot, adjacent to the fields, which prompted immediate environmental testing. The site work in the west lot was stopped and the excavation area was contained. The initial tests indicated the presence of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and petroleum hydrocarbons at concentrations above acceptable standards for residential and commercial use, as determined by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), in deep soil in the excavation. A second round of samples was taken on July 20th and included soil and indoor and outdoor air testing. The results of the air quality tests indicate all selected factors were within acceptable levels. The results of the second round of soil samples confirmed the previous results, which showed concentrations of PCBs above the residential cleanup standard along with low levels of some metals. On Friday, July 29, 2011 the results of a third set of shallow soil samples taken closer to fields 3 and 4, reflected PCBs levels that are above acceptable standards for residential or commercial use. These results prompted the closure of all fields as a precaution until a more comprehensive understanding of the extent of the issue could be determined. The Greenwich Public Schools/Board of Education, the Town of Greenwich and the GHS-MISA Building Committee are working in collaboration to address the environmental concerns of the fields at Greenwich High School. Licensed Environmental Professionals have been contracted to plan for and conduct more comprehensive testing. The Town, State Departments of Health and Environmental Protection, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have also been consulted.*

Update:

Surface Soil Sampling Test Results: As of August 10, 2011, the results of 161 surface soil samples, some taken from 0 – 1' depth and others taken from 0 – 3" depth, have been received. The testing protocol has focused primarily on PCBs thus far, though the next round of tests will include other potential contaminants. The most recent test results, PCBs were not detected in the soil around the football stadium and tennis courts. Approximately 75% of the PCBs detected to date have been located in the soil beneath the grass area between the west parking lot and turf fields 3 and 4. The additional locations for which samples exceeded the most restrictive levels were along the right outfield line of the softball field #5 where it borders turf field #4, the outfield of the baseball field #2 and the west side of turf field #3. A Significant Environmental Hazard report will be filed with DEEP (in accordance with CGS Section 22a-6u) as a result of one soil sample that exceeds the stated reporting levels, with a PCB level of 53 mg/kg. The single location that yielded this result is within the protected fenced area in the construction zone.

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Fields: Greenwich High School fields will remain closed until further notice. The School District and the MISA Building Committee are prioritizing the surface soil testing of all GHS fields to provide the necessary data to determine if there is a safety risk for the public to use the fields. This testing is still ongoing, with the target of making decisions quickly regarding access to some or all of the fields. If the initial testing results are confirmed, then it might be possible to gain access to the Stadium field and tennis courts soon, followed by Fields 6 and 7. The decision to open a field will be based on input from officials from the offices of the US EPA, DEEP and Connecticut Department of Public Health, who are working with the BOE's Licensed Environmental Professional consultant in developing testing protocols and interpreting test results. School District and Town officials are working together to create contingency plans – in the event they are needed - for all programs (GHS physical education, extra-curricular and interscholastic sports, Town, and Community, etc.) that use the fields.

Start of School: At this time, school will open for students and staff as scheduled.

MISA Building Committee: The Greenwich High School Music Instructional Space and Auditorium (GHS-MISA) Building Committee is continuing to follow the plans discussed at their last meeting held on Tuesday, August 2, 2011, summarized as follows:

Environmental Evaluation Plan: The Phase I report, which is a history of the site and the building, is nearing completion. Concurrently with the completion of that report, the environmental consultant developed a Phase II/III comprehensive testing plan for the construction site and the fields in order to delineate the extent of the contamination both vertically and horizontally. Testing protocols have been developed for both surface and deep soil. There has been a lot of progress on the surface soil testing program, which is targeted at obtaining the information upon which the Federal, State and local officials can determine which, if any of the fields can be opened. The results of the boring program, a limited part of which started this week, will be used to determine the vertical extent of the contamination. The boring program will take several months to complete and will be conducted in several phases.

Disposal of Excavated/Stockpiled Soil: A plan to remove the excavated soil that is piled in the west lot has been developed. Both of the piles of soil have been determined to be contaminated and will require removal to an approved facility. The piles have been appropriately secured and fenced off per standards and arrangements are being finalized for their removal. Comprehensive air monitoring will be conducted during the removal of the piles to document safe work practices. Once completed, the parking lot will be restored to usable condition. The contractors are working hard to complete this work before the scheduled start of school.

Funding: The BET approved the release of additional funds of the MISA construction budget to cover the unanticipated costs of testing and site restoration. The Board of Education will cover the portion of the testing expense to determine the contamination outside the construction zone from its operating budget; while MISA is covering the testing costs required for the building project. A total testing budget of \$200,000 was developed to cover this investigation phase.

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Impact on the MISA project: The scope of work planned for this summer at GHS in the north and south lots will be completed. The work in the west lot was halted when the contamination was found and will not be completed at this time. A decision on the repositioning of the front driveway will be based on soil sample testing results that is expected by August 12th. At this point in time, the planning for the building construction work slated to begin in the fall is continuing on schedule. Adjustments in the construction schedule may need to be made once more information is known about the site's environmental situation.

The next regularly scheduled GHS-MISA Building Committee meeting is August 16, 2011, 7:30 a.m., Havemeyer Building.

Updates are posted to the District and Greenwich High School Web Sites as new information becomes available: www.greenwichschools.org - click on "Updates on Environmental Testing at GHS"