



# Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street ♦ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

Paul B. Ash, Ph.D.  
*Superintendent of Schools*

(781) 861-2550, ext. 212  
email: [pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
fax: (781) 863-5829

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Dear Estabrook Parents and Guardians:

On October 12, the Superintendent's Advisory Committee met with the EH and E consultant, Dr. MacIntosh, and discussed the latest test results. (Please see the attached reports.) While the previous five rounds showed a four-fold reduction in PCB levels, the last round of testing did not. Overall, we have made significant progress in reducing the PCB levels in the school. I believe we have now achieved the 300 nanogram/cubic meter guideline for the entire school on an annual basis.

While the kindergarten wing is still empty, we want to take this opportunity to determine if we can still achieve the 100 nanogram/cubic meter guideline for these rooms. In order to identify remaining sources of PCBs, Dr. MacIntosh's team will further analyze the information that is available and take action if indicated. More tests will be undertaken this week, including testing the unit ventilators to determine if they are a major source of PCBs.

When you look at the PCB levels measured in rooms 2, 3, 4, and 5, please note that these tests were designed to measure PCB levels during winter conditions (reduced outside air coming into the room). That is why the numbers in rooms 3 and 4 were in the 300 nanograms/cubic meter range. By bringing in additional air into rooms 3 and 4 during the fall and spring, we are confident that we can significantly lower PCB levels. (Please see the chart that shows PCB levels in rooms 1, 2, and 5 that received extra air intake.)

During our many meetings as an advisory group, we have debated what PCB maximum guideline we should use. On a national level, the EPA guideline level is 100 nanograms/cubic meter for three to six years olds, and 300 for six to twelve year olds for PCB mixture Aroclor 1254. Monsanto Chemical produced many different mixtures of PCB products until 1978. Since the specific type of PCB mixture matters, we are seeking the EPA's view from the Washington DC office, for Estabrook specifically.

We now have considerable data that shows the Estabrook PCB mixture is made of a lighter range of molecules. In particular, our data shows that the PCBs at Estabrook are a mixture of the Aroclor 1254 (a heavier mixture used by the EPA to set a general guideline) and Aroclor 1016 (a lighter mixture of PCBs). Aroclor 1254 is a mixture of PCB compounds with more chlorine atoms attached to the biphenyl molecule than Aroclor 1016. The important point is that Aroclor 1016 in the Estabrook mixture is less hazardous than Aroclor 1254, which the EPA used to set its guidelines. If the EPA decides to set its maximum guideline based on Estabrook's actual PCB mixture, then the generic 100-300 nanogram/cubic meter guideline may be increased by the EPA. Therefore, in order to learn what the

EPA considers to be the proper guideline levels for Estabrook, Dr. MacIntosh will be speaking with the EPA in Boston and Washington DC about Estabrook specific data. We are seeking their specific guidance on the appropriate threshold levels for Estabrook, in order to properly move forward for all grade levels.

Although we expect Dr. MacIntosh will speak with the EPA risk assessment team very soon, we do not know how long it will take until we will receive an opinion from the EPA office in Washington DC. In the meantime, we will continue to use the current national standards as our target.

For the next three weeks, Estabrook students will remain in their current classrooms. Based on current data and EPA guidelines, I am confident our numbers will be approved by the EPA for all classrooms, grades 1 through 5. We are not sure whether the numbers for kindergarten classrooms in the kindergarten wing can be brought below EPA guidelines for kindergarten age children, unless the EPA modifies its guidelines, based on the lighter more prevalent mixture of PCBs found at Estabrook, or we further identify source(s) of PCBs and reduce them. If we cannot get levels low enough in the kindergarten wing, we may have to consider using the modular classrooms through June in conjunction with using the current Grade 4 classrooms 26 and/or 27 (rooms with very low PCB levels) as kindergarten classrooms.

Please know that we are working hard to resolve this issue in a timely and efficient manner. Your patience and understanding as we work in this uncharted PCB territory are most appreciated. I am planning to meet with the Advisory Committee in about two weeks, and will share information with you once it becomes available.

Sincerely,

Paul B. Ash, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools