



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Malibu High School Modernization Update:  
Management of Building Materials Underway**

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) continues to make progress on the extensive modernization and construction projects at Malibu High School (MHS), including the new construction of several buildings, along with the replacement of windows and doors and the installation of new flooring in other buildings.

As part of the construction and modernization process, the district is abating and managing environmental hazards such as lead paint, asbestos and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The removal of PCBs in the window and door caulking has been proceeding well and is on schedule. As part of this work, source PCBs have been discovered in other building materials that were not previously suspected.

“In the spirit of transparency, we are providing this new information to staff, parents and community members to explain our process for managing and abating these materials,” Superintendent Dr. Ben Drati said. “The health and safety of our staff and students is our top priority as we work to modernize our schools.”

The existence of environmental hazards in building materials does not present a hazard without a pathway of exposure. The common pathways for exposure to PCBs are inhalation through the air or dermal contact that is ingested, usually through dust. The buildings at MHS have been extensively air and wipe sampled as part of our sampling project over the past three years, most recently in the summer of 2017. A high majority of samples have been non-detect and all are below the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) thresholds for safe school occupancy. Testing continues as the project progresses. (See link below for test results.)

“The recent discovery of additional source materials is not a cause for alarm,” Dr. Drati said. “The buildings and rooms at MHS are safe to occupy by students and staff, based on our test results.”

This new discovery follows the testing of buildings A and B/C to determine material components prior to demolition, as required for safe handling and disposal. As was reported previously, PCBs were found in the concrete slab in a section of the administration building (B/C), potentially as a result of migration from mastic (the glue used to attach the floor tiles).

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Since the Malibu High School main two-story building (D) contains flooring materials similar to the B/C building, the district conducted PCB sampling of flooring in the D building, leading to the discovery of PCBs in several types of tiles and in different types of mastic.

PCBs have been detected in the art and special education building (G), in the varnish on the plywood walls, in the woodshop and the ceramics room. The adjacent special education suite has a drywall facade preventing exposure or accessibility to the varnished plywood.

“We will continue to work with the EPA and environmental consultants to safely manage these materials,” Dr. Drati said. “We will manage or dispose of hazardous materials in strict compliance with the law and directives of EPA.”

SMMUSD continues to conduct Best Management Practices (BMP) cleaning, as endorsed by the EPA, on a regular basis at all schools, which reduces dust and improves indoor air quality. All areas where abatement and removal occurred this past summer, were tested and cleared before re-occupancy.

School districts in California and throughout the country have been facing similar concerns regarding PCBs, asbestos, and lead paint for several years and follow the EPA guidelines recommending management in place of potentially PCB-impacted building materials until the time of planned demolition or construction, which continues to be the SMMUSD plan approved by the EPA.

“SMMUSD has the health and safety of students and staff in mind as we continue to manage these issues as part of our construction plan, in accordance with EPA support and guidelines,” Superintendent Dr. Ben Drati said. “We will continue to provide our families and the community with information and reports to validate our process and the health-protective measures we take as we work to modernize Malibu High School.”

SMMUSD Chief Operations Officer, Carey Upton, will speak with the Malibu High School PTSA at the next meeting, January 25, 2018 at 9 am at MHS. All parents are invited to attend the meeting.

Dr. Drati plans to schedule a parent and staff information meeting to provide a project update and respond to questions about the hazardous material remediation and removal plan. More information to follow when the date is set.

[Recent testing reports](#) are posted on the Environmental Reports page of the SMMUSD Facility Improvement Projects department website.

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