



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **District Re-Opens FIFTH Building on Malibu High Campus – Malibu Middle School's Blue Shark Building – When Environmental Testing Shows No PCB Exposure Issues**

**MALIBU, Calif.** – Environmental test results at Malibu High School (MHS) continue to be announced and continue to indicate the school is safe for students and staff. Today, the District re-opened Malibu Middle School's Blue Shark Building (Building E) – the fifth building to re-open on the MHS campus where nine buildings have been identified by the District for air and surface wipe, as well as soil testing on the campus, after parents raised concerns about PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) exposure.

To date, environmental tests conducted over the summer have consistently found that students and staff are not in danger of unhealthy levels of exposure to PCBs, based on EPA's health-based benchmarks.

The re-opening of the Blue Shark Building at the middle school, which is the first classroom building located on the MHS campus to be re-opened, comes just four days after the District circulated a letter from the EPA to Sen. Barbara Boxer, validating the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's environmental testing program, noting, "The District has been responsive to (EPA) protocol by taking extensive air and dust samples in classrooms at Malibu High School in preparation for classes to begin in fall, based on EPA-approved procedures."

The July 31 letter, signed by the Administrator for EPA's Region IX, provided a brief overview of the situation, relayed background regarding the wide use of PCBs in school construction from the 1950s until 1979, and explained that, "Based upon the science, EPA's current recommended approach for school managers is to focus testing on air and dust for PCBs to assess the level of hazard, if any, to student and teacher populations." He also noted that the primary issue surrounding PCBs is "identifying PCB exposure pathways of concern" and the need to "limit or mitigate those pathways," which is in line with the practices utilized by the SMMUSD environmental consultant, ENVIRON.

"So far, the overall PCB test results continue to show that the classrooms and offices on the campuses of Malibu High School and Juan Cabrillo Elementary School are either showing non-

detectable levels or levels below EPA's acceptable benchmarks," said Doug Daugherty, Managing Principal at ENVIRON, an international environmental and health sciences consulting firm hired by SMMUSD to address concerns about PCB exposure at MHS and Juan Cabrillo Elementary.

Malibu Middle School's Blue Shark Building is the fifth building re-opened on the MHS campus following test results that showed PCB levels that were either non-detectable or below the EPA benchmarks for further action both before and after the cleaning. Recently the District has re-opened the Cafeteria/Auditorium, the Administration Building and the Library Building. On July 18, the Old Gym re-opened.

### **Background**

Based on recommendations made by the US Environmental Protection Agency, ENVIRON developed a program for both MHS and Juan Cabrillo that includes air and surface testing and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for cleaning classrooms in order to limit exposures to PCBs. EPA has concurred with the program developed and implemented by ENVIRON, which includes testing, cleaning, and then testing again to ensure cleaning practices were working.

Many public buildings built nationwide between 1950 and 1980 were constructed with caulk, light ballasts, and other building materials that contain PCBs. The EPA and others in the environmental scientific community are aware of this. **However, the existence of PCBs in building materials does not represent a danger in and of itself.** In order for PCBs to present a danger, there must be an exposure pathway and levels of PCBs that exceed health benchmarks. The pathways for exposure are inhalation or ingestion, not simply their presence in caulk. For that reason, the EPA recommends testing of air and surface dusts for PCBs, as these tests can determine whether occupants of the buildings are being exposed to PCBs and, if so, at what levels. The EPA has adopted health-based thresholds or benchmarks for PCBs in air and dust and it is the EPA thresholds that have guided the District's testing and other actions.

As results are reviewed, it is also important to note that the thresholds requested by EPA for MHS and Juan Cabrillo, for both air and surface wipe samples, are some of the most conservative used for this type of testing.

All air, soil and surface testing is scheduled to be completed before the start of school. The District will open and occupy classrooms **only if** the testing results are in line with the protective public health standards set by EPA indicating that the schools/rooms are safe to occupy. If the results are delayed or outside of acceptable limits set by EPA for any buildings or rooms or limits set by DTSC for outside areas of the campuses, the District is preparing start-of-school contingency plans.

"The health and safety of our students and staff is our first priority," said Superintendent Sandra Lyon. "No one will be housed in these buildings until the testing results indicate that it is safe to do so."

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Editor's Note: For additional information about ENVIRON's work with the school district, including weekly reports it provides, please click [here](#).