

PORT WASHINGTON Union Free School District

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January 16, 2019

Dear Guggenheim Parents/Guardians:

We want to bring you up-to-date on recent developments and plans concerning Ms. Miller's and Ms. Haworth's classrooms. First, let me provide some background information for those of you less familiar with this issue:

- Prior to the Thanksgiving break, Ms. Miller and Ms. Haworth had indicated they each had noticed a distinct odor in their classrooms (different in each classroom). At that time, our Director of Facilities, Jim Ristano, began an intensive investigation of the situation, first by testing levels of CO₂, humidity and temperature. Those results were all negative, and have remained negative to date.
- Following this testing, all contents and a significant amount of supplies were removed from Ms. Miller's room to determine if any of these items could be the source of the odor. In Ms. Haworth's room, ceiling tiles were removed to determine if there was any mold issue. Additionally, wall fabric on bulletin boards was removed. An outside environmental consultant was brought in to test for moisture and mold. All these tests proved negative.
- We also brought in the BOCES Health and Safety liaison for Nassau Schools who found no cause for concern. We did discover a broken switch on a rooftop exhaust fan in the area of the classrooms which we fixed the same day it was discovered. Additional air quality tests were subsequently taken with negative findings. We also used a scoping camera to check the area between the usual classroom ceiling tiles and the building roof, and nothing was found.

In addition to the above measures, the District brought in a specialist from an arm of the NYS Department of Labor, known as PESH—Public Employee Safety and Health Bureau, to determine if there was any latent issue from a water leak back in 2017. That inspection was conducted in December, which included screening for CO₂, temperature and humidity. The results of that inspection, which the District recently received, indicated that all levels were

within ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers) guidelines. No mold or water leaks were observed on site.

Over the December break, the District also subjected each classroom to "ozone cleansing." When contaminants such as odors make contact with ozone, their chemical structure is changed to less odorous compounds. As more ozone attacks the remaining compounds, the odor is eventually destroyed. Ozone essentially reverts back to oxygen after it is used.

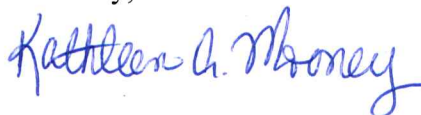
Throughout this period, we have honored Ms. Miller's and Ms. Haworth's requests to be able to teach in alternative spaces. Ms. Miller has been using the school's art room and Ms. Haworth's class has been in the school's library. It is important to note that library and art services have not been curtailed. Both library and art services have been provided, uninterrupted and as scheduled, with the art teacher and library/media specialist providing instruction through a push-in model.

Currently, both classrooms are being painted and floors are being cleaned. We anticipate Ms. Miller's classroom will be set up and ready for her class to return by the end of this week. There are still a few ceiling tiles to be replaced in Ms. Haworth's classroom, but we expect the return of her class to its classroom sometime next week. As Ms. Miller and Ms. Haworth return to their classrooms, the art room and the library, respectively, will return to normal use by all students in Guggenheim.

We recognize that this situation has resulted in some inconveniences for students and staff. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we conducted comprehensive testing. Always be assured that student and staff safety, health and well-being are our first priorities.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Guggenheim Principal, Ms. Barbara Giebel, at 767-5250.

Sincerely,



Kathleen A. Mooney, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

KAM/ZE/da

cc: Board of Education
Ms. Mary Callahan
Mr. James Ristano