

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor
Eric E. Whitaker, M.D., M.P.H., Director

4302 North Main Street • Rockford, Illinois 61103-5202 • www.idph.state.il.us

February 23, 2005

#102180501

Gregory M. Lutyens
Nelson Elementary School Dist. #8
PO Box 880
Rock Falls, IL 61071

Dear Mr. Lutyens:

At the request of a concerned parent, the Illinois Department of Public Health conducted a limited indoor air investigation at the Nelson Elementary School on February 18, 2005. The investigation was conducted by Steve Johnson of our Rockford Regional Office. Jennifer Kolb (from the Lee County Health Department) was also present. You were contacted during the investigation and given some information regarding mold and indoor air. In addition to a visual inspection for mold, several carbon dioxide measurements were taken.

No mold was observed during the investigation. However, it was noted that there is an occasional roof leak in the 5/6th grade room. The water runs down the wall between the classroom and the gym.

Several carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels were taken with a Q-Trak Indoor Air Quality Monitor. Carbon monoxide was also monitored for during our investigation and none was detected.

Carbon dioxide is a normal constituent of exhaled breath and is commonly used as a screening tool to evaluate whether adequate volumes of fresh outdoor air are being introduced into a building. The outdoor concentration of CO₂ ranges between 350 - 450 parts per million (ppm). If indoor levels are more than 1,000 ppm, there is probably inadequate ventilation; and complaints such as headaches, fatigue, eye and throat irritation may be prevalent. The CO₂ itself is not responsible for the complaints. High levels of CO₂ may indicate the presence of other contaminants in the building that could be responsible for occupant complaints. The levels of CO₂ detected in your school ranged from 950 to 1,035 ppm.

Recommendations

- Although there was no mold observed in the 5/6th grade classroom, we recommend that the roof leak be repaired. An essential step in preventing mold growth is correcting any moisture problems.
- Many schools remain closed up during the summer months when relative humidity's are high. As a result moisture may condense in classrooms causing mold damage. If this is a problem in your school we recommend that dehumidifiers be used during the summer months to prevent condensation.

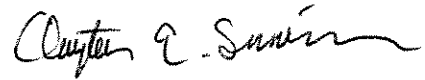
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- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has developed a program called *Tools for Schools*. This program is designed to assist schools in identifying and addressing indoor environmental quality issues. For information about this program or to obtain a kit, please go to www.epa.gov/iaq/schools.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Rockford Regional Office at 4302 North Main Street, Rockford Illinois 61103, telephone 815/987-7511.

Sincerely,



Clayton E. Simonson, L.E.H.P.
Regional Supervisor

SJ:sj

- cc - Central Office
- Rockford Regional Office
- Tim Trader, Lee County Health Department