

## 1/13/17 PS 199 SLT Minutes

### Members in attendance:

Andrea Steinkamp  
Anu Sehgal  
Danielle Cione  
Ellen Shultz  
Enrique Gonzalez  
JoEllen Schuleman  
Karen Kemp  
Kirsten Loderer  
Liz Sutherland  
Louise Xerri  
Peter Rockwitz  
Robert Schlaff  
Scott Oscher  
Victoria Kopper  
Wendy Hutter

### Guests:

Richard Van Pelt, PS 199 Custodian  
Stacy Rosen, PS 199 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher

Aloysee Jarmoszuk/DOE  
Bill Estelle DOE/DSF  
Jim Driscoll DOE/DSF  
John Hession DOE/DSF  
John T. Shea DOE/DSF  
Matt Angel/Superintendent Ilene Altchul's representative  
Michael Mirisola DOE/SCA  
Tim George DOE/DSF

1. December 9<sup>th</sup> minutes approved.
2. Today is a special SLT meeting regarding the PCB issue at our school. Guests attending our meeting are from various divisions of the Department of Education (DOE), Division of School Facilities (DSF), and School Construction Authority (SCA).

A meeting was held in December with Louise Xerri, Enrique Gonzalez, Victoria Kopper, Liz Sutherland, Richard Van Pelt, Linda Rosenthal, Gus Ipsen, John Shea, Jim Driscoll, John Hession, Michael Mirisola, and Aloysee Jarmoszuk.

Michael Mirisola confirmed duct cleaning took place over the December break and no testing for PCBs has been done since the cleaning. All fans are on and operating normally for the entire building. When the testing does occur, the results will be sent to the EPA

and they will decide what to do. They develop “best practices”. No representative from the EPA attended today’s meeting.

Louise wants a letter from the DOE, DSF, and SCA that she can send to parents to inform them of the PCB issue. The test results from October indicated the gym tested at 351, the library at 252, a classroom was at 231.

Michael said these numbers “all fall within guidelines”. (See EPA guidelines on last page).

Liz said the library and gym are above guidelines for young children.

Enrique asked about the removable filters in the gym and auditorium.

John Hession said there are 22 exhaust fans on the roof. The gym and auditorium have new filters installed.

Enrique asked when the gym would be retested now that the ducts were cleaned.

Michael said testing is supposed to be imminent.

Liz said in December they discussed testing more rooms and asked if there is indeed a plan to test all rooms.

Michael said not at this time because rooms they have tested are below acceptable numbers. SLT members disagreed with this statement and again asked for more rooms to be tested.

Andrea said she pulled every test done on this school from the SCA website. Our school is being used as a guinea pig. Different rooms are tested, filters are on, filters are off, and there is no data trend because the tests are being done inconsistently. How are we going to change the testing process?

Michael said scientists do testing. They do different testing for certain reasons. They found acceptable numbers. He said according to everything he is reading the numbers are consistently low. He said he assumed their methodology was correct and testing circumstances are done differently on purpose.

Andrea said they should test the whole building and Michael said he would relay that information. He says he is not sure what the issue is and why we are upset.

SLT asked why the EPA are not here to answer questions if he is not able to provide answers.

Peter said his room has never been tested.

Michael said many remedial steps have been done. They do things according to EPA guidelines. The numbers have gone down and they fall within guidelines. SLT members again stressed that the numbers do not fall within guidelines for children under the age of 6.

Wendy asked what the resistance is to testing the whole building to which Michael said he doesn't know. Wendy said we need baseline testing of the entire building. She raised concern about the construction expected to begin shortly next to our building (new high rise on Amsterdam and 69<sup>th</sup> Street) and asked for retesting during and post construction.

Liz asked who is making these decisions to test or not test, is it the EPA or the SCA?

Victoria said this started as a pilot program and that Ross Holden (General Counsel, SCA) said our building tested differently than any other school building. The pilot program has ended but we don't want to be abandoned. We all have the same information but we're looking at it differently.

Michael asked what would be considered successful? Is it 0 PCBs?

Victoria said she'd love to see 0 but she knows it's not going to happen. She does want every room tested.

Michael asked if every room is tested and it's below guidelines, would that be enough?

Kirsten asked if any other schools end up at 0.

Enrique asked where is the EPA? Why aren't they at this meeting?

Michael said good point.

Enrique said his union (UFT) spoke with the EPA over the summer.

Michael suggested Enrique could ask the UFT to pressure the EPA to come to the table. The teachers union has their own dedicated industrial hygiene department.

Danielle was pregnant the year the results came out. Another teacher was also pregnant at that time and her doctor advised her to leave the building. We need consistency. The building has been here for 50 years. We need testing and retesting.

Peter said the soil was dug up 2 years ago and hasn't been retested. Of course, he's concerned about long-term results. He's been teaching here for 32 years.

Robert said the guideline number that elementary school children ages 6-12 can be exposed to is 300 and the gym has been above that. The guidelines refer to a certain amount of classroom exposure, but with after school programs (like Sports and Stuff)

children have increased exposure time that needs to be factored in, including kindergarten age children that have lower recommended exposure levels.

Liz said PCBs are still in the building, but their source hasn't been found. What are next steps?

Andrea and Wendy asked who pays for testing and how much does it cost. Michael said the SCA pays and he doesn't know the cost.

Wendy asked what is the protocol for when guidelines are over or high? Are we meant to use rooms that are tested as above guidelines?

Aloysee said the DOE could look at what they spend on environmental testing. Her takeaways are that we're having anxiety about the building and we want the entire building tested.

Liz asked who here today has the power to get the EPA to the table. No one said they could do that.

Aloysee said 2 city laws require written notice to current families, former families of students, and teachers when environmental tests are performed at the school and the results are above guidelines.

Liz said we have received nothing from the DOE except the lead in water letters. We need centralized communication from the DOE to the families.

Aloysee said that's a fair ask.

Louise said a lot of teachers have concerns and parents have a right to know. All rooms should be tested.

Aloysee will work with the office of school health.

Michael said he would request the gym be retested.

The SLT noted that the SCA made no commitments to any of our requests including expansion of the PCB testing to all classrooms, firm dates for follow up PCB testing, or further investigation into the source of PCB contamination. The SLT also noted that the SCA are unable to answer many of the questions we are asking and defers them to the EPA but that no EPA representative have made themselves available to meet with the school.

Submitted by Ellen Shultz, SLT

**From EPA website regarding guidelines for PCB exposure in schools:**

**Exposure Levels for Evaluating PCBs in School Indoor Air (ng/m3)\***

Age: 1-<2 yr	Age: 2-<3 yr	Age: 3-<6 yr	Age: 6-<12 yr elementary school	Age: 12-15< yr middle school
100	100	200	300	500

**Highlight**

Assuming that PCB exposures through pathways other than school indoor air are equal to average background PCB exposures for those pathways, these indoor school air concentrations should keep total exposure below the oral RfD of 20 ng PCB/kg-day.

\*(Note: Exposure levels were rounded to the nearest hundred ng/m3)

EPA recommends that the concentrations of PCBs in indoor air be kept as low and the total PCB exposure be kept below the RfD level. The concentrations provided in the table are based upon average situations. School-specific exposure levels can be calculated if sufficient data are available.

For example, if students spend more time in school than was assumed when calculating the values in the table, the levels of PCBs in the school's indoor air may have to be lower to prevent overall exposure from exceeding the RfD. Similarly, PCB concentrations in a school's outdoor soils or indoor dusts greater than those in non-school environments would indicate a potential for increased exposure from these pathways. Thus, school

indoor air concentrations would need to be decreased to maintain overall exposure below the RfD. Building owners and school administrators who want to make calculations based on their own specific circumstances should contact their [EPA regional PCB coordinator](#).