

August 30, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians of West Shamokin High School Students,

Your understanding and cooperation with the delayed start of school at West Shamokin High School is appreciated. The purpose of this letter is to provide clear information about the situation, current action, timeline, and next steps. Please take some time to carefully review this entire letter. We have included detailed information for awareness of families.

On the afternoon of August 29th, a discolored chair fabric was noticed in a classroom. The discolored area was suspected to be mold of some type. The building custodian notified the director of facilities. All rooms were visually inspected. Air quality samples were collected in seven classrooms and analyzed by the environmental engineering firm of Skelly and Loy. Results of the tests received on August 30<sup>th</sup> indicate that four rooms showed spore counts of the mold, *Aspergillus-Penicillium*, higher than what is found in the outside air. *Aspergillus-Penicillium* spores are found in abundance in common areas and in the outside air.

Upon receipt of these results, as a precautionary measure, air sample tests were scheduled to be conducted in all Armstrong School District schools starting on the evening of August 30<sup>th</sup>.

Per discussion with a representative of Skelly and Loy who was present for testing and the review of results, it is important to understand some information about mold and other allergens. Mold spores and allergens are part of outdoor and indoor environments. Even though we cannot see them, they are a regular part of our environments. Part of the testing includes a comparison of indoor air quality and humidity in relationship to outdoor conditions. The initial test results showed slightly elevated levels of spores in the air. These levels vary from room-to-room. The swab samples from affected areas showed *Aspergillus-Penicillium*. This is one of the most common forms of fungus and mold in indoor and outdoor environments.

While there are certain ranges for consideration of air quality, the Skelly and Loy representative indicated that there are a number of factors that need to be considered when analyzing test results. Different people have different levels of sensitivity to the same conditions. For example, some people are allergic to pet dander or pollen. Other people do not show a sensitivity. Out of an abundance of caution and clear need to remediate affected areas, the decision was made to postpone the start of school at West Shamokin High School. This decision allowed the district to immediately devote all resources to the issue.

Beginning the morning of August 31<sup>st</sup>, Reynolds Restoration Services will thoroughly clean and remediate affected areas. Once surface areas are thoroughly cleaned, a process will occur in each affected space that includes High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtered machines for air and carpet. When complete, the district will again work

with Skelly and Loy to collect new air samples for all spaces. We must then wait for the lab results.

In an effort to provide an appropriate amount of time to properly remediate and conduct additional testing, the first day of school for students at West Shamokin High School will be on Thursday, September 6. Pending further testing, and the timeline for cleaning, we expect that start date to be accurate. However, if additional testing indicates a need for further remediation, the start of school at West Shamokin may be again delayed.

Please refer to the district web page for further details. As information becomes available, we will update you via the web page and through phone messages.

Respectfully,

Chris M. DeVivo  
Superintendent  
Armstrong School District

Josh Williams  
Assistant Superintendent  
Armstrong School District

Stephen Shutters  
Principal  
West Shamokin High School