



JORDAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IAQ CONCERNS –PUBLIC STATEMENT

April 17, 2015

As you are likely aware, Jordan Elementary School staff has raised concerns regarding mold in the building this school year. Jordan Public Schools takes these concerns seriously and has enlisted our assistance to investigate concerns. Other than one isolated incident, IEA has not found evidence of conditions that suggest the presence of a possible mold concern. The one incident (described below) was investigated and addressed in a timely manner per industry standards. Subsequent investigations did not identify an ongoing airborne mold concern or any building-related issues that could cause moisture damage and subsequent mold growth. We are confident that the building provides a safe and healthy environment for students and staff.

In IEA's ongoing investigation of mold concerns, IEA follows standard indoor air quality (IAQ) practices. The goal of an IAQ investigation is to locate visible mold and, if found, to control the moisture issue that caused the fungal growth and to provide direction on proper removal.

Testing performed in November 2014 indicated that the airborne fungal level in one classroom, Room 69, was elevated compared to other classrooms and outdoors. The type of mold detected is a common mold present in soil that can grow on food, and moisture-impacted dust, clothing, and wallpaper. This mold organism is associated with allergy-type symptoms such as eye, nose, and throat irritation. A small patch of light fungal growth was identified on the base of a bookcase in the classroom. The growth on the bookcase did not appear to be the source of the detected airborne mold spores due to the species identified and the limited amount of growth. No other evidence of mold growth or moisture was visible in the classroom. Carpet dust sampling conducted at the same site visit indicated normal levels of mold spores and common outdoor mold spores in the dust. Since carpet dust provides a history of what has been in the air, this suggests that the source of the elevated airborne spores was from a recent event rather than an ongoing issue. Since building sources for the mold were ruled out, it is likely that the mold spores originated from something brought into the classroom. Elevated airborne fungal levels were not found in Room 69 during follow-up testing.

IEA was informed that some parents questioned why they were not notified of the November 2014 airborne mold result for Room 69. Air sample results are just one piece of an IAQ evaluation. Airborne mold levels can change dramatically over short periods of time, so elevated levels are not always indicative of a problem. Activities that disturb settled dust (e.g. vacuuming) can result in a temporarily elevated airborne fungal level. One air sample result is typically not considered sufficient evidence of an air quality concern. In *Recommended Best Practices for Mold Investigations in Schools*, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) states that: "the confirmed presence of a particular organism generally requires that: (a) it is found in several samples, (b) it is identified several times in a single sample, or (c) there is visual evidence of or source sampling indicating its growth in the building."



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IEA did not observe visual evidence of mold growth in the classroom. Since no obvious source was present in the room, we recommended further investigation as described below.

Based on the Room 69 testing results, IEA recommended removal of the small patch of mold growth, thorough cleaning, including carpet cleaning and wet wiping of surfaces, and further investigation to look for hidden sources of moisture or mold. The District completed the recommended actions in a timely manner. Outside contractors inspected the HVAC system and conducted an infrared scan of the walls and roof to look for potential moisture issues. No issues were identified in the wall cavities, roof, or HVAC system. Follow-up air testing conducted by IEA in December 2014, February 2015, and April 2015 indicated normal levels and types of airborne mold spores in Room 69 and the other tested classrooms. IEA's reports are available through the District and on the District's website for review.

The District is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students and staff. IEA will continue to test airborne fungal levels in concern and representative areas until the end of the school year. IEA has confirmed that the District will also continue to conduct annual IAQ walkthroughs of the building to document evidence of conditions or activities that could impact air quality as recommended by MDH. Whenever evidence of mold growth is identified, the District will follow MDH guidelines which advise correcting the critical cause (excess moisture) and remediating the mold growth quickly in a safe and effective manner. MDH does not recommend mold testing during initial efforts to respond to a potential mold problem. Mycotoxin testing also is not recommended. Mycotoxins are chemical compounds that are released by some types of fungi under certain conditions. Most research studies related to mycotoxin exposure involve ingestion (e.g. of moldy grain). The risk associated with inhalation of mycotoxins in indoor environments has not been established. According to Dr. Harriet Burge, a leading expert in indoor air quality, "no research has documented that anyone has ever been exposed to enough mycotoxin from exposure to indoor fungal growth to actually cause any of his/her symptoms with the possible exception of agricultural environments." She also stated that mycotoxin exposure in indoor environments is expected to be quite rare.

IEA has provided IAQ services to school, industrial, commercial, and healthcare facilities for over 25 years. IEA has a team of experienced and certified staff and works closely with government agencies, such as the Minnesota Department of Health, to continue to provide quality services. For additional information, please see attached IEA company profile.



The Institute for Environmental Assessment, Inc. (IEA) was founded in 1984. IEA is committed to providing practical, cost-effective environmental safety consulting compliance for private and public organizations. IEA's work is centered on the built environment. Through our expertise, experience, and reputation, IEA delivers the most practical, thorough, and up-to-date services in the ever-changing dynamics of indoor environments.

With offices in Brooklyn Park, Rochester, Mankato, Brainerd, and Marshall, Minnesota, IEA has a staff of 50 professionals who provide consultative services in specialized areas. Our clients include school districts, colleges, universities, hospitals, government agencies, and businesses in a variety of industries throughout the country. Our experts design and execute solutions that accomplish specific goals of your company.

Environmental Project Design and Management

IEA employs a team of experienced and EPA-Certified Licensed Asbestos Inspectors, Management Planners, Site Supervisors, Project Designers, and Lead Risk Assessors. IEA provides asbestos awareness training, demolition surveys, material inspection sampling and assessments, hazardous waste removal and clean-up management plans, AHERA inspections, lead sampling and inspections, and project management.

Our company is widely recognized for its knowledge in asbestos and lead project design and management, including AHERA and NESHAP compliance.

Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ)

IEA has capabilities to provide comprehensive IEQ assessments and solutions to building owners and managers. Our team includes a certified industrial hygienist, indoor environmental consultants, public health professionals, and engineers who are available to assist in resolving IEQ concerns.

IEA provides investigative mold/moisture assessments, proactive IEQ management, remediation design and monitoring, HVAC performance evaluations, ventilation system commissioning or re-commissioning, and healthcare infection control consulting and design.

Our team has conducted thousands of indoor air quality evaluations of varying scopes and sizes. Our projects include semi-annual, proactive indoor air quality testing of over 30 million square feet of commercial office/light industrial buildings.

Our IEQ work falls into the following categories:

- **Investigations.** This includes data collection, visual assessments, inspections and reporting.
- **Proactive Management.** We conduct baseline and semi-annual surveys, draft management plans, and develop training sessions for building staff.
- **Remediation Design and Monitoring.** We design and monitor remediation programs and help clients maintain compliance with building codes and standards.



Environmental Health and Safety Services

IEA has trained and experienced personnel able to assist with OSHA and EPA compliance, including employee exposure assessments, health and safety management plans, safety audits and inspections, hazardous material control and remediation, and training.

IEA's engineers, certified industrial hygienist, public health professionals, certified safety professionals, and certified playground safety inspectors have access to existing written programs, plans, management systems and proven, time-tested implementation procedures to offer a health and safety compliance team that is poised to provide cost-effective, efficient, and professional compliance services.

Environmental health and safety is a complex area that involves regulatory agencies, numerous state and federal programs and federal laws. At IEA, we offer a comprehensive safety program to include compliance plan development and implementation, training, and project management.

Listed below are some of the compliance programs we deliver to keep you up to date with OSHA/EPA/DOT regulations:

- Employee Right-to-Know
- Arc Flash/NFPA 70E
- A Workplace Accident & Injury Reduction Program (AWAIR)/Safety Committees
- Forklift/Powered Industrial Vehicle Safety
- Hoist/Lift/Crane Safety
- Lab Safety/Chemical Hygiene
- Machine Guarding
- Job Safety Analysis
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Fall Protection
- Hazardous Waste
- Welding, Cutting or Brazing
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Radon
- Respiratory Protection Program
- Underground Storage Tanks (USTs)/Aboveground Storage Tanks
- Fire Safety
- First Aid/CPR
- Infectious Waste
- Lockout/Tagout
- Bleacher Safety
- Compressed Gas
- Confined Space
- Community Right-to-Know (CRTK)
- Electrical Safety
- Emergency Action Plan
- Emissions
- Hearing Conservation
- Integrated Pest Management
- Metal Halide Lighting Replacement
- Playground Safety
- Pool Drains and Diving Boards
- Process Safety Management