



**Oz Hill**

Chief Operating Officer

May 22, 2023

Dear Frankford High Community:

I am writing today with some difficult news about the environmental conditions at Frankford, and the timeline for repairs and return.

The extent of the damage identified at Frankford was unexpected, and we have been unable to quickly identify a nearby swing space that could be prepared in time for this school year to accommodate our students and staff, as well as meet all the programmatic needs. For that reason, **Frankford will be closed for in-person learning for the remainder of this academic year.** We also expect we will need to keep the school building closed next year due to the necessary environmental and other work, including HVAC, and repairs needed throughout the facility.

We are working to identify and prepare a viable space for Frankford students for in-person learning for the start of the next school year, and we are working closely with Principal Calderone to assess options.

The decision to close a school is not taken lightly. Every day, licensed inspectors are working throughout District buildings to identify damaged asbestos, and we are often able to repair it in the evening when schools are closed, without having to disrupt in-person learning. However, there are occasions when the work to be done is more extensive, as is the case at Frankford:

- Damaged pipe wrap was identified on the ground floor in the hallway and cafeteria above existing ductwork and drop ceilings. These materials have not been abated to date, but a work plan has been developed. It was this damage that led to the ultimate closure of the school, as this space is critical to school operations and not possible to isolate.
- Asbestos abatement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor has been taking place since the closure of the school. Abatement on these floors has consisted of repairing damaged plaster materials and pipe wrap. The 4<sup>th</sup> floor has not been in active use for several years because of environmental and other property conditions.
- Other damaged asbestos containing materials have been identified throughout the school structure that to date have not been repaired. These materials were not considered fiber release episodes, meaning there was no debris or dislodged material, and will continue to be repaired during the course of normal AHERA maintenance.
- Asbestos containing floor tile was replaced last week within the Welcome Center, which remains in use for limited staff.

District leadership and the Frankford School administration continue to explore alternative learning sites for the next school year. Discerning factors include the following and more:

- proximity to Frankford
- School leadership's desire to keep the school community together in one facility or on the same campus
- facilities' environmental conditions
- community safety data
- breakfast and lunch service

This news understandably may raise questions about exposure. There is no way to accurately calculate potential exposure in a school, given the number of people, movement in the building, areas of damage, and the invisible nature of potential fibers. The presence of asbestos materials itself is not a risk. However, should you have concerns, please contact your healthcare providers. There are also online resources with information, including:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: ABCs of Asbestos in Schools:

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/abcsfinal.pdf>

ATSDR (part of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention): Asbestos and Health: Frequently Asked Questions: [https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/noa/docs/Asbestos-FAQ\\_ENG\\_web.pdf](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/noa/docs/Asbestos-FAQ_ENG_web.pdf)

Frankford, we know this is disappointing news. We are working diligently to provide a safe and healthy environment for the school community, and we will keep you updated along the way with important information.

Sincerely,

Oz Hill  
The School District of Philadelphia  
Chief Operating Officer