



Orchard Elementary School Soil Remediation Plan FAQ

A public informational meeting was held at Orchard Elementary School on January 22, 2020 to provide a historical perspective of the site and explain the remediation plan, which will be completed in the summer of 2020. This document addresses questions and concerns presented by the public. More information can be found on the new [Public Information](#) page of the District website. Updates on the project will be sent periodically, and all communications, presentations, and supporting documents will be posted on the website.

Closure of the Orchard field and grassy areas / Posting of NJDEP signage regarding soil contamination and remediation

- The field and grassy areas at Orchard Elementary School have been fenced off and closed as a precautionary measure, and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) remediation signage has been posted at the site.
- These areas will remain closed until the completion of the remediation project.
- Children will have access to the playground and blacktop areas for outdoor recess and activities.

Why wasn't the public notified?

- The public notice from 2007 has been added to the district website; the letter dated September 5, 2007 can be viewed on the Public Information, Orchard Remediation Plan page of the district website.
- Currently, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) signage has been posted at the site, and soil testing results and all documents associated with the Orchard project can be accessed on the district website.

Why was the first communication about the soil remediation plan and the informational meeting sent only to the Orchard Community?

- No malintent was meant when the initial letter was sent to the Orchard community. All communication since the public meeting on January 22, 2020 has been sent to the entire district, and the letters and presentations have been posted on the district website.

Is the town involved?

- Yes, the Village Engineer is aware of the issue and has received the testing data. We are required to get soil permits from the village for this project.

Have we communicated the historical fill issue to other towns?

- Yes, the Village Manager of Glen Rock has been informed about the concern raised at our public meeting.



Has an independent third-party consultant been hired?

- The district is working with a Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP) from LAN Associates and Land Use to assist the Ridgewood Board of Education in monitoring the NJDEP Application and remediation work of WSP.
- The district has also met with an additional LSRP from PS&S, who is developing a proposal for our review.

Why wasn't there follow up with NJDEP in 2001 and 2007?

- It appears that the proper paperwork was submitted, but there was no follow up with the NJDEP regarding the status of the submission. If the paperwork had been accepted by the NJDEP during those times, the NJDEP environmental case would appear to be closed with the current soil in place.

In 2000, was a demarcation line installed when the regrading of the Orchard site was completed to satisfy the required 18" cap and level parts of the property?

- A demarcation line was installed in the playground area only.

Why were the Orchard fields reopened in 2007?

- Following a temporary two-month closure, the Orchard fields were reopened after soil testing was conducted, and health professionals provided assurance that the site was safe for use.

Incomplete testing

- Testing on the Orchard site dates back to 1997. At that time, the soil tests indicated no detectable levels of PCB's. A full list of compounds tested can be found in the documents posted on the district website.

Why did we apply for the recreational standard as opposed to the residential standard?

- This approach was the result of a discussion with the NJDEP in June 2019. While we applied for the recreational standard based on this discussion, the application was rejected, and we will complete the work to meet the residential standard.

Is there a reason why the area outside the tennis courts was not tested?

- The NJDEP has identified these sites as remediated and closed with no further action necessary. This information can be found on the NJDEP website.

What is being done in wooded area south of the athletic field?

- We will be fencing that area with proper NJDEP signage on the fence, and there will be no access from Ridgewood Public School property. This is a low-lying wet area.

Is there more than one way to remediate the soil?

- The remediation plan is being done in the manner outlined by the LSRP from WSP because of the NJDEP concern about disturbing the ash below, as well as the wetland and flood plain issues in this area. The LSRP from LAN, who was consulted on this project, agrees with the WSP remediation plan.

Why would we use mulch instead of soil on the playground?

- Mulch is used on the playground to protect against injury when students fall. We replace certified mulch annually at a depth that is appropriate for student safety, as well as requirements outlined by this remediation project.

- Mulch and soil are equally environmentally safe for this project.
- If the mulch is not evenly distributed, additional mulch will be added as a precaution.
- Soil was removed from the playground area in 2000, and a barrier and additional mulch were installed.

Can we remove the mulch and install rubber playground material instead?

- Rubber material is not used on school playgrounds.

Has anyone considered covering the entire area with concrete or turf?

- Portions of the site are a wetland and flood hazard area. Installing non-permeable material (concrete) would not be permitted.
- Putting turf on the entire area would not solve the issue with the other grassy areas that need to be addressed. We would never be able to turf from property line to property line and along the brook. This would require removing soil, causing concern of disturbing the ash or raising the turf up higher than the one foot of soil we are proposing.

What is the anticipated schedule from now through the completion of the remediation?

- State, county, and local permits are being completed and submitted at this time.
- Bids will go out 3/30/2020 or sooner with a 4 to 6-week window for bid solicitation and award.
- Construction will start on 6/25/2020 with the preliminary mapping of the site to start earlier.
- All three LSRP's feel that 45 days is a very comfortable timeframe to complete the work.

Can the public see bids and contracts?

- We will be providing information on the dedicated page of the district website. Notifications will be sent when new material is uploaded.

How do we know the contractor will install clean fill?

- The clean fill is required to be tested at the quarry.
- We will also conduct testing on the clean fill prior to its installation on site.

How will the site be managed?

- The site will be closed during the remediation work, and the entire area will be fenced.
- Summer programs will not run at Orchard Elementary School.
- The LSRP from the environmental firm will be present at all times during the work on the site.

How will we ensure that the material will not be airborne during the remediation project?

- Dust monitors will be used during the soil removal process. If sensors pick up readings in excess of the standard, the work will immediately shut down. Work areas will be sprayed with water to minimize the dust during the remediation work.
- The only odors associated with the remediation work will be those of soil.
- The remediation work will be compartmentalized; only one area at a time will be addressed and completed.
- Trucks containing historic fill that is being removed will be capped as they leave the site.
- Erosion controls will be in place during the work, as required by state, county, and local authorities.

Can we tent the fields during the work?

- Dust controls and monitoring will be in place throughout the project. Tenting such an expansive area is not practical for the type of work that will be done, including the removal of material.

Will the building be sealed during the work?

- Dust control methods will be used at all times. Additionally, our AC and univents are cleaned every summer. These systems will not be turned on while work is in progress.

Is there any potential for vapors to enter the building?

- All three LSRP's, WSP, LAN, and PS&S, as well as the district environmental consultant, have stated that this is not a vapor environmental issue. Additionally, there are many different materials in schools such as floor wax, art supplies, and vinyl cove base, which will release vapors. All LSRP's have stated that this type of environmental concern is not a vapor emitting issue.

Will the Board conduct testing of BAP's for our kids?

- The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) will be coming to Ridgewood to discuss health concerns you may have at a public meeting. Based on the timeframe the NJDOH has provided, this meeting will take place either late February or early March. Once the details of this public meeting have been determined, a letter will be emailed and posted on the website.

Will testing of the water and air be conducted?

- The Ridgewood Water Company tests our water. In 2016, all districts were required to test the water in their schools for lead. Our results and corrective action plan can be found on our district website under the Business Office tab. Furthermore, letters with results were sent to each school community, as required, and can be found on the district website.

What will happen if the work is not completed in time for the start of school?

- The project timeline of 45 days includes a time buffer. All three engineering firms we have consulted expressed that this is ample time for this project.

How will home values be impacted?

- The Orchard Elementary School site will be properly remediated this summer, and the issue will be closed with the NJDEP. The district will obtain the proper Deed Notices and follow through with NJDEP, as required.
- If you feel you have an environmental issue on your property, you will need to engage an environmental professional of your choosing.

Have we tested the soil at other schools?

- All other Ridgewood Public Schools with NJDEP issues identified in prior years have been addressed, and the NJDEP has closed their files on each location. There is no indication that new testing is warranted.
- The following link to the NJDEP website contains a listing of the Known Contaminated Sites in New Jersey. <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/srp/kcsnj/>