



April 1, 2020

Dear Ridgewood School Community,

Yesterday, I received a Letter of Health Consultation (LHC) from the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) addressing health concerns related to possible exposure from contaminated fill at the Orchard Elementary School. As you may recall, we had been in consultation with the NJDOH to schedule a public meeting; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a public meeting is no longer an option. Please click [here](#) to view a copy of the NJDOH Letter of Health Consultation (LHC). The conclusion of the 11-page document is as follows:

The NJDOH concludes that exposures to PAHs and lead in surface soil at the Orchard Elementary School are not likely to harm people's health. Based on our risk assessment using site specific scenarios and above average ingestion rates, the NJDOH concludes that harmful health effects are not expected from the potential exposure pathway to soil contaminants. It should be noted this evaluation assumes the areas are not covered with grass and mulch, i.e. that direct contact with soil is occurring. Therefore, it can be assumed that the exposures or the actual risk would be lower as these areas are predominantly covered. The outside areas of the school, including the recreational field, can continue to be used without posing a health risk to children until soil remediation is completed to bring levels below the NJDEP RSCSCC. Although based on our evaluation harmful health effects are not expected to occur with continued use of the recreational field, NJDOH supports the actions being planned as prudent measures to protect public health.

Additionally, I would like to inform you that the bidding process for the project has started. The bidding was advertised on March 25, 2020, and I have been told that 14 companies showed interest. The walkthrough for the project occurred on Tuesday, March 31, 2020, and the bid opening will take place on Wednesday, April 22, 2020. The link to the bid and LHC can be found at https://www.ridgewood.k12.nj.us/our_district/public_information/orchard_remediation_plan.

I hope everyone stays healthy and physically distant from each other while maintaining connections. We will get through this unprecedented global health crisis together.

Sincerely,

Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

C: Ridgewood Board of Education
Dr. Yankus, School Physician

