

Brighton Elementary School PCB Test Results

May 12, 2023

Dear Parents, Caregivers, and our Staff:

We are writing to provide you with an update on the recent testing for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in our school.

PCBs are a group of human-made chemicals commonly used in building materials and electrical equipment before 1980. PCBs can be released into indoor air from building materials that contain PCBs. PCBs can cause serious health problems. The potential for health effects from PCBs, as with other chemicals, depends on how much, how often, and how long someone is exposed to them.

Indoor air testing for PCBs took place at Brighton Elementary School during the month of September. An environmental consultant collected samples of indoor air that were processed by a laboratory, and then reviewed by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and the Vermont Department of Health.

What was found?

Three rooms or spaces were at or above the lowest Vermont Immediate Action Level. An additional eight rooms or spaces were at or above the lowest School Action Level.

Immediate Action levels pose a greater exposure risk, so rooms that are at or above these levels won't be used for instruction.

The Vermont Immediate Action Levels are:

- 90 ng/m³ for pre-kindergarten
- 180 ng/m³ for kindergarten through 6th grade
- 300 ng/m³ for 7th grade through adult

The Vermont School Action Levels are:

- 30 ng/m³ (nanograms per cubic meter) for pre-kindergarten
- 60 ng/m³ for kindergarten through 6th grade
- 100 ng/m³ for 7th grade through adult

Test results are listed below.

Why are the levels different for each age group?

Food is the main non-school source of exposure to PCBs for most people. Younger children are exposed to more PCBs per their body weight from the food they eat. The school action levels

take into account the total exposure to PCBs for students and staff from the food they eat. That is why the school action level is lower for younger children and higher for older children and adults.

Test Results

Approximately one third of all rooms or spaces, such as stairways or hallways, in the school were tested. Rooms and spaces not listed were not tested.

Room or Space	Result (ng/m ³)
27, PreK classroom	200
2	110
30	110
16	56
26	48
15	47
Gymnasium/Multi-purpose Room	47
14	46
20	43
24	39
6	33
Boiler Room	21
13	14

What happens next?

Our goal and the goal of our state partners is to ensure a safe learning environment for students and staff.

Our consultants will work with DEC to identify and address the sources of PCBs. The Health Department recommends that while our consultants work with DEC we lower the exposure of students and staff to PCBs by limiting the number of hours spent in the school and taking steps to reduce PCB levels within six weeks. We have chosen to take the following next steps. **This decision is supported by the Health Department.**

- **Restricting use of space.** We will not use room 27, the PreK primary classroom, for any classes until mitigation measures are in place and the indoor air levels are below the immediate action level. We are limiting the amount of time students and staff spend in the school.

- **Installing carbon air filtration units** to reduce PCB air levels. This strategy has been shown to be effective. Additional air quality testing will be done in all spaces with air filtration units to make sure that PCB levels in the indoor air are reduced.
- **Increasing the amount of fresh, outdoor air** the ventilation system is bringing in and by opening windows where possible.
- **Hiring an environmental consultant** to identify sources of PCBs in the school and address those sources to lower the levels of PCBs in indoor air.
- **We are working with the state agencies** as we develop a plan to address impacted rooms. As soon as we have that plan finalized, we will share it with the school community. We are still planning to hold summer programs at our school. We will work with DEC and the Department of Health to reassess how we use the school to make sure we are health protective.

Please refer to the table below to see how the rooms can now be used. Please note: only 30% of rooms were tested. Some rooms that were not tested have limited use because they are of similar construction such as age, paint, windows, flooring, etc., to tested spaces above the school action level. These are called “groups” in the temporary occupancy plan below.

Temporary Occupancy Plan

Room	Group	Result (ng/m ³)	29 hours per week PreK	27 hours per week K-6	45 hours per week 7-Adult
2, Intervention Office/Art, PreK	1	110	Not use	Use	Use
3	1	Not Tested	Not Use	Use	Use
4	1	Not Tested	Not Use	Use	Use
5	1	Not Tested	Not Use	Use	Use
6, Middle School Science	1	33	Use	Use	Use
27, PreK classroom	1	200	Not use	Not use	Use
28	1	Not Tested	Not Use	Use	Use
29	1	Not Tested	Not Use	Use	Use

Room	Group	Result (ng/m ³)	29 hours per week PreK	27 hours per week K-6	45 hours per week 7-Adult
30, Classroom, Kindergarten	1	110	Not use	Use	Use
31, Classroom, 3 rd grade	1	Not Tested	Not use	Use	Use
Kitchen office	1	Not Tested	Not Use	Use	Use
15, Library, PreK	1B	47	Use	Use	Use
23	1B	Not Tested	Use	Use	Use
Kitchen storage	1B	Not Tested	Use	Use	Use
Gymnasium/ Multi-purpose Room	1B	47	Use	Use	Use
12	1B	Not Tested	Use	Use	Use
1	2	Not Tested	Use	Use	Use
9	2	Not Tested	Use	Use	Use
10	2	Not Tested	Use	Use	Use
14	2	46	Use	Use	Use
16	2	56	Use	Use	Use
17	2	Not Tested	Use	Use	Use
18	2	Not Tested	Use	Use	Use
19	2	Not Tested	Use	Use	Use
24	2	39	Use	Use	Use
25	2	Not Tested	Use	Use	Use
13	2	14	Use	Use	Use

Questions?

- Find **more information about PCBs**, including the complete test results, at dec.vermont.gov/pcb-schools.
- For **testing and test results questions**, email SOV.PCBSampling@vermont.gov.
- For **health-related questions**, email AHS.VDHPCBSchoolSampling@vermont.gov
- Community meeting with state officials: Wednesday, May 17th, at 6 p.m. Staff from DEC, the Department of Health, and the Agency of Education will be at this meeting to answer your questions.

Sincerely,

Annsunee Swift,
Principal, Brighton Elementary School

Elaine Collins,
NCSU Superintendent of Schools