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GREENSBURG, PA. 15601

Nicely Safeguard Project Initiated

By LANCE KRISTAN
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A KRC Research Corp. crew is expected to complete work at the Nicely Elementary School later today in an attempt to contain asbestos fibers emitted into the air from damaged ceilings.

The New Jersey firm, hired by the district this week for the emergency project, will continue work at the Metzgar Elementary School during the weekend and apply a special sealant to the building's hallway ceilings.

Workers wearing protective clothing yesterday began sealing off the work area at Nicely. On the doors to the entrance to the school, signs sternly warned that protective measures be taken before entering the building.

The signs read: "Asbestos dust hazard. Wear assigned protective equipment. Do not remain in area unless your work requires it. Breathing asbestos dust may be hazardous to your health."

Air quality tests will be conducted prior to the application of the sealant at Metzgar to discern if there is asbestos in the air. But unlike Nicely, the ceilings at the Metzgar school have not been damaged.

Greensburg Salem School Superintendent Robert Dovey said Thursday that the school district will hold to its original plans to open both schools Monday. The Nicely school, the focus of the controversy, has been closed since Wednesday to permit work in the building to begin.

Dovey said that district's consultant on the asbestos problem, Dr. Nurtan Esmen, will conduct sophisticated air quality tests at both schools on either Monday or Tuesday of next week to determine the effectiveness of the sealant.

"We want to conduct the tests while the children are in school," Dovey said. Parents of Nicely students have argued that the testing must be done under normal classroom conditions.

Dovey said Esmen was requested to perform the air quality assessment largely in response to parents' objection that tests conducted by KRC Research Corp. would not be impartial. He said that Esmen's findings will be made available five days following the test. Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Greensburg Salem Education Association said yesterday that the teachers union is "satisfied" with measures being taken by administrative officials to correct the problem.

Joseph Dovyak, a teacher at the Metzgar Elementary School and president of the association, said that his concern about the effect of asbestos on health had been expressed to the school administration.

"Nothing formally has been stated, but we have been in contact with Dr. Dovey," Dovyak said. "The teachers have knowledge of the asbestos danger," he said.

"If the measures taken by the district are for the benefit of the students, they are for the benefit of teachers, too," Dovyak said.



(J.R. Downs Photo)
Hallway Prepared

Nicely In, Metzgar Out

Classes will resume this morning for Greensburg Salem students at Nicely Elementary School. Meanwhile, school is canceled today at the Metzgar Elementary School.

Nicely was closed last week because of the potential danger of asbestos fibers being emitted into the air from damaged ceilings. The school will reopen now that KRC Research Corp. has finished applying a special sealant to the ceiling and maintenance people have cleaned up any asbestos residue.

Students at the Metzgar Elementary School, however, will have a day off while district maintenance workers wash down the walls, desks, and radiators at the school.

Superintendent Robert Dovey said that the New Jersey firm was expected to finish sealing the hallway ceiling at Metzgar sometime late yesterday. Maintenance personnel would then finish with the mop-up operations Monday, which necessitated canceling class at the school.

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