

Closure of Joe Parent Vocational Center

Kuspuk School District has decided to close the Joe Parent Vocational Center until further notice as of the end of the operating day of Friday March 22, 2013.

This decision is made due to updated information that has recently come to the District from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) regarding the chemical soil contamination at the site, which includes trichloroethylene (TCE). These agencies set the acceptable limits for indoor air target levels for various chemicals that may be present in commercial or residential facilities.

The Joe Parent Vocational Center has a depressurization system that helps prevent TCE vapor from entering the building and the Kuspuk School District runs numerous air purifiers that scrub the air. The District has worked with off site agencies that have been monitoring the level of TCE associated with this building for many years. During this time of monitoring, the level of TCE has generally been within the acceptable levels and there was no imminent threat to the health and safety of those that occupy the facility. The funding for that monitoring ended in May of 2012. The District has been working with other agencies to continue this monitoring but has been unsuccessful as of the date of this press release. The depressurization system and air purifiers, however, remain operational.

While there is no reason to believe that the TCE levels in the building have materially changed since the last monitoring event, without accurate and up-to-date data and information, the District has decided to act in a cautious and prudent manner to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff by closing the facility for the time being until we can obtain new monitoring data. . The District will reevaluate the closure of the building once it has had an opportunity to review current data on TCE levels. The District's decision to close the building is made in an abundance of caution and is based primarily on the lack of up-to-date monitoring information.

The health and safety of our students and staff that may be using the facility has always been and will continue to be our first and foremost concern.

The District will continue to work with outside agencies to secure a reliable sampling and monitoring program that will provide valuable up-to-date information about TCE levels.. Until the time comes that we have the appropriate monitoring data, the District will look for alternative places to hold any classes and other academies that may have previously been held at the Joe Parent Vocational Center.

As more information becomes available we will post that information on the District web site (www.kuspuk.org) and we will communicate with persons at face-to-face meetings as necessary. For anyone that would like more information, please feel free to contact Superintendent Brad Allen at 675-4250, ext. 222.