

Miller Place Union Free School District

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VIA Connect Ed Email

May 22, 2019

RE: Update Regarding Repairs to MPHS Gym

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

Thank you for your patience as we navigated the path to correct the situation with the Miller Place gym floor. As you are aware, during the spring recess period we were alerted to a potential issue that the covered synthetic floor could be periodically releasing mercury vapors.

Thank you for recognizing that the process of remedying this situation is new in the New York State K-12 public school environment. We are fortunate to have various State Education Department representatives, and our professional consultants, assisting us with this process, which is slow and multifaceted.

Since my last communication to you, we have accomplished the following:

- ✓ The gymnasium remains closed, sealed, under negative air pressure with no access to students and staff.
- ✓ Physical education classes are occurring in alternate locations with no interruption of instruction.
- ✓ Athletic Programs have been maintained with relocation of practices, games and matches.
- ✓ Concerts were held as scheduled without needing to be relocated.

Regarding the flooring, the following has occurred:

- The State Education Department issued the District a building permit to begin the emergency repairs.
- When students were not in class, the wood floor was removed and disposed of according to recommended disposal methods.
- When students were not in class, the synthetic flooring was removed according to EPA regulations. These materials have been contained and are no longer on our site, as they are being shipped to the proper containment location.
- The removal of both floors was done between the weekday hours of 9:00PM to 5:30AM, and around the clock on most weekends.
- During the removal process air testing was conducted in the surrounding areas to confirm there was no cross contamination and the air was safe for students and staff.

- Each bleacher section has been removed and disposed of accordingly. The District is waiting for proposals on replacement bleachers, which we expect in the next few weeks, for installation in late September or early October.
- The folding partition door has been removed and disposed of accordingly. The District is waiting for proposals on a replacement “curtain”, which we expect in the next few weeks, for installation in September.
- The basketball backstops have been protected from the removal process, but will need to be lowered 1 to 3 inches once the new flooring is permanently installed.
- The scarifying of the existing slab was completed this week.

Immediate next steps:

- The gym is being professionally cleaned this week according to environmental rules and regulations.
- Once cleaned, we will begin the necessary air sample testing.
- Review the results of the core testing of the slab to insure they are below the recommended safety levels.
- Based on those test results we will proceed according to the recommendations of our expert environmental consultants and contractors. The choices may be to remove the slab, encapsulate the slab, and/or begin installing the new wood flooring.

Steps within the next few weeks/months:

- Installation of the new wood flooring.
- Installation of the new bleachers.
- Installation of the new wall divider.
- Lower the basketball backstops.
- Professional cleaning of the entire gym and surrounding areas.

June 2019 Miller Place High School graduation ceremony:

As we continue to navigate through these repairs, the logistics of our upcoming graduation ceremony has stayed at the forefront of our planning. Knowing our graduation ceremony may be impacted, we examined multiple options. As you may be aware, our District does not have a predetermined rain date for the high school graduation ceremony, as we typically hold graduation indoors during bad weather.

After much research and reflection, our options included:

- Adhere to the scheduled date, with an outdoor ceremony on campus and hope for no rain.
- Schedule rain dates of Thursday, and Friday if needed, and maintain the outdoor on-campus ceremony.
- Move the ceremony to an alternate indoor location, which included neighboring high school gyms, a catering hall, or local colleges.

Through this planning process, we continue to recognize high school graduation is a family event. Parents/guardians plan months in advance for private celebrations, which may include travel plans for family members, scheduling days off from work, and other variables. Therefore, we understood the unanticipated scheduling of a rain date could negatively impact our graduates and their families.

As we researched alternate indoor off-campus locations for the ceremony, we maintained the priorities of:

- The date remaining, Wednesday, June 26, 2019.

- The ceremony start time remaining 6:00PM.
- Not limiting the number of family members attending, or issuing tickets in order to attend.
- Securing a location that could accommodate 2,000 attendees – graduates, chaperones, faculty, parents, family members and guests.
- Ensure access for ample parking, restroom facilities, and be handicap accessible.
- Geographically close to our District to minimize travel time for our families and guests.
- Maintain the integrity of the ceremony and honor our traditions as best as possible.

It became apparent the most favorable location would be relocating our ceremony to Stony Brook University. Although this initially seemed like a daunting task, our uncertainties were reduced as Senator Ken LaValle quickly came to our aid. He and his office staff gave us guidance, support and help in navigating this process and yesterday we received confirmation we have secured the Stony Brook University Island Federal Arena for our graduation ceremony, meeting all of our priorities noted above.

Later today, Mr. Slavin will be sending parents of our June graduating class a separate Connect Ed message containing the logistical information regarding our relocation of the ceremony, on Wednesday, June 26th, at 6:00PM, to Stony Brook University, for families to plan accordingly.

On behalf of our school community – faculty, staff, administrators, Board of Education, but mostly our graduates, and families – we thank Dr. Julie Lutz, Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Mr. David Wicks, BOCES Regional District Superintendent, Senator Ken LaValle and the Stony Brook University Athletic Department for their understanding and willingness to assist us during our time of need. We are extremely grateful and appreciative of your support.

On behalf of the Board of Education and administrative staff, I again thank our school community for your cooperation and support over the past several weeks as we continue to navigate these uncharted waters. Our commitment in continuing to provide a safe learning and work environment for our students and staff remains one of our top priorities. I will continue to provide you with updates regarding our remedy for the gym flooring as they are confirmed and available.

Wishing everyone a safe and restful Memorial Day Holiday.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marianne F. Cartisano
Superintendent of Schools