

## **Willowridge High School Mold Remediation FAQ**

### **When was the mold discovered at WHS?**

The power was shut down for construction in late June. During the first week of July, the Project Manager discovered suspicious growth. In the days that followed, an environmental consultant took samples and confirmed the presence of mold. It is believed that the conditions outside (with increased humidity) combined with the fact that there was no A/C in the building factored into the rapid growth of the mold spores.

### **How widespread is the mold? Is it black mold?**

Suspicious growth was initially discovered in the Band Hall offices, but spread throughout the building, impacting a significantly large area of the school in some way, including offices, classrooms, etc.

While some media reports have referred to it as being "black mold," lab results from spore samples identified the mold as *Penicillium*, which is a common type of mold and not toxic black mold.

### **Has the school ever had mold issues before now?**

Not of this nature or widespread. In older facilities, it is fairly common to have mold develop in areas that have excess moisture.

### **Is the mold harmful to my student's health?**

Exposure to mold has little or no effect on a healthy person, and is typically harmful only if ingested. If you have any health concerns, please contact your family doctor or visit an area health clinic.

### **What about student uniforms stored at the school... are those safe for students to wear?**

Yes. The District has contracted a professional cleaning company to thoroughly clean all band, JROTC and athletic uniforms for student use throughout the school year.

### **When do you expect the school to be cleared for students to re-enter the building?**

Because the health and safety of our students and staff is the highest priority, Fort Bend ISD will not clear the building until it has been completely cleaned and reinvigorated, and all necessary furniture and instructional items have been installed and delivered.

While District staff was initially optimistic that this could be achieved before the start of the school year, the District has learned that this will not be possible due to the extensive process and the lead-time required to restore the building and purchase replacement items.

District leaders have been working very closely with the WHS administrative team to develop alternative plans for the start of the 2017-18 school year, and we will advise our community about the plans as soon as they are finalized. Transportation will be provided to all students.

**How will we know the building will be safe for re-entry?**

We are working with certified environmental experts, who are required to follow state regulations, to clean and sanitize the building. Certified experts will then inspect the building to confirm that the area is mold free before crews replace flooring, sheetrock and ceiling tiles. Engineers will also conduct a full inspection on the school's HVAC unit, giving it a thorough cleaning and tune-up to control the airflow throughout the campus.

**How do I contact school staff if the building is closed?**

Willowridge summer staff is currently housed at Marshall High School (1220 Buffalo Run, Missouri City, 77489). You may contact staff at WHS' main number, 281-634-2450.

**How is Fort Bend ISD supporting WHS staff members who have lost personal items?**

Fort Bend ISD leaders are working closely with WHS administrators to make sure that all instructional materials, furniture and other items that have been lost are replaced as quickly as possible. However, we understand that many staff members also lost personal items, and we also want to support them in this difficult situation.

Because FBISD cannot replace personal items using district money, donated funds will be used to assist teachers with replacing the personal items they have lost. Proceeds from an online donation site (RevTrak) will be going into a faculty fund that can be used by the WHS administration to reimburse WHS teachers and employees for the value of personal items lost.

**What is being done to ensure a safe learning environment for all students? Will there be extra police?**

The administrative teams at both high schools are committed to a safe and secure learning environment, and, as they have in the previous years, will continue to work with students and staff to promote respect at all levels.

All Fort Bend ISD high schools have two assigned police officers who are on campus each day to support students and ensure safety. This means there will be four FBISD police officers at the combined MHS/WHS campus.

**How will you ensure a positive learning environment?**

Administrators at WHS and MHS are continuously working to ensure a positive learning environment. Both campuses have staff members who are dedicated to helping students and being positive role models. They are also committed to building relationships with students and fellow staff members.

**Are schools regularly checked for mold? What does the remediation plan include?**

All FBISD campuses are checked on a daily basis by custodial staff who are constantly walking the building to check for any issues. In many instances, mold begins to grow when there is a spill that has not been properly cleaned and there is increased humidity. In these instances, as long as the mold is under 25 square feet or less, the area is cleaned and treated.

In the case of WHS, the growth was much more widespread, so experts were called in to test the area and develop a remediation plan. Contractors are working 24/7 to clean and sanitize the building. As they clear areas, other crews are coming in to install ductwork, ceiling tiles and other items.

**What about extracurricular activities and fine arts? Will those programs continue to be offered for students at both schools?**

Both schools will retain their unique athletic and fine arts programs. Coaches are working together to set up schedules and practices. Fine Arts teachers are also working together to ensure that all students and staff members are supported, carrying on with their usual activities and schedules.

**As a result of the combined school, will MHS become overcrowded? Will classes be combined?**

Marshall High School has the capacity to handle 2,400 students, providing sufficient space needed. Additionally, the administrative teams are working together to ensure that instruction remains the top priority.

In order to maximize space and ensure optimal student instruction, it is possible that in some instances, some MHS and WHS students would be in classes together. However, the students would still receive instruction from a teacher from their home campus.

**Why didn't Fort Bend ISD use portables to increase the number of classrooms at MHS?**

Fort Bend ISD staff considered this, however, due to an extensive permitting process to ensure student and staff safety, movement of portables was not feasible. In the time that it would take to move portables and get through the permitting process, it is hoped that students will already be back at WHS. Will insurance cover the costs associated with remediation and the replacement of items lost? Fort Bend ISD's coverage does not cover mold. Consequently, Fort Bend ISD will cover the costs of the remediation using major maintenance funds, which are set aside for emergencies.

**Will students be able to take the same CTE courses that were previously offered at both campuses?**

All students will continue to have the same opportunities as they would have at their home campus. Labs and classrooms are similarly equipped at both campuses, and teachers will work together to alternate and utilize labs. Some teachers will also have the opportunity to join together in their efforts.