



For Immediate Release

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## **Statement regarding air quality concerns at Nichols Junior High**

ARLINGTON, Texas, Feb. 2, 2017 – On Sept. 22, a few Nichols Junior High staff members reported feeling ill and the building was evacuated as a precautionary measure. At that time, the air was tested and found to be safe.

Since that time, some staff members have reported similar concerns regarding the indoor air quality. The district has conducted its own thorough tests and walk-throughs of the building and worked with the Arlington Fire Department, two independent environmental labs, the Environmental Protection Agency and Tarrant County Public Health to conduct additional tests and review our procedures. Tests have been conducted to look at air quality and possible contaminants, and both visual and lab tests have been conducted to look for mold. Student attendance and clinic data have also been monitored. To date, there is no evidence of a health risk. TCPH found that current observations do not warrant additional actions.

“The district continues to address concerns promptly and comprehensively and share information with staff and parents as it is received in order to resolve the situation and ensure the safety and health of our staff and students,” Superintendent Dr. Marcelo Cavazos said. “We continue to work diligently to identify and address any possible conditions that may be causing the concerns reported by some staff members.”

A recent assessment of the HVAC systems at Nichols found that insufficient natural fresh air input could be causing an odor in parts of the building. The odor is not reported to be a health risk, but air balancing work is scheduled to begin Monday to address that issue. The district is awaiting final results on the recent indoor air quality observations of the building. Since tests continue to indicate that there is nothing in the building that is causing a health risk, other possible causes and factors are also being reviewed.

“The health and safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance,” said Board President Jamie Sullins. “The Board and district are committed to reviewing and addressing concerns to find a resolution to this issue. We are confident in the results of the testing and analysis done thus far that indicate nothing that would cause a health risk, and we will continue to work with industry experts to correct any potential issues in the building.”

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