

Dear Oak Ridge Parents and Staff:

Guilford County Schools was informed by the National Institute of Safety and Health (NIOSH) on October 19 that the final report (no final date of release at this time) will have no role in the decision to re-open Oak Ridge Elementary School. As a result of receiving this communication (see below), the administration will meet tomorrow to discuss in detail the status of our current work with the Turner Group and when we should anticipate completing our remediation efforts. Please note that we are following NIOSH recommendations related to completing the remediation work without the building being occupied. We will continue to work with NIOSH and Turner and provide an update later this week.

From NIOSH:

Guilford County Schools will determine when the school reopens, and NIOSH has no role to play in this decision. As you know in July 2009, we performed a three day site visit at Oak Ridge Elementary School at the request of Guilford County Schools. On the last day during a breakfast meeting, we met with representatives from Guilford County Schools and discussed our observations and recommendations. We discussed the following findings:

1. Musty, moldy odor from the basement and crawl space under the media center
2. Surface drainage/landscaping issues around the school
3. Blocked storm drain with standing water
4. Damaged roof
5. Inadequate flashing
6. Moisture in the gym's exterior concrete block wall
7. Pressure airflow issues between conditioned and unconditioned spaces
8. Outside humid air entering through the classroom wing soffits

After the site visit, we sent an email to the school administration that briefly summarized our conversation (visit <http://www.gcsnc.com/oakridge/NIOSHemail.pdf> to view) and have been in contact with them since our visit. NIOSH has evaluated numerous buildings and has found that indoor environmental quality problems can generally be corrected using remediation practices that are fairly standardized. For Oak Ridge Elementary School these are the following: 1) remove carpet and replace with hard floors (after testing slab for moisture content), 2) install a vapor barrier and depressurize the crawl space under the media center, 3) repair the roof, 4) repair the flashing, 5) seal classroom wing soffits, and 6) recommission the HVAC system.

Although the final report is not out, these specific issues and our recommendations were discussed with the school administration. We have found that remediation similar to what we recommended is easier to do when a building is not occupied and that health effects associated with dampness commonly continue and are made worse when remediation occurs in occupied buildings. Accordingly, we think the decision to close Oak Ridge Elementary School during the remediation to address the underlying issues of water intrusion, humidity, and ventilation was a prudent one. In our report, we are summarizing the many consultant reports and timeline of remediation of which we hope will be useful. However, we do not anticipate that the decisions regarding reopening the school are dependent on receipt of the final report.

Sincerely,

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If you have any questions, please feel free to send an e-mail to [oakridgefeedback@gcsnc.com](mailto:oakridgefeedback@gcsnc.com).  
As always, thank you for your continued support of Oak Ridge!