

Update on the Soil Contamination

A couple of months ago, we reported that soil contamination was found in the areas of construction to the West and North of the Aula. The contamination was discovered as part of the regular construction process and done in accordance with state and federal laws. The contaminant discovered that exceeds regulatory guidelines was arsenic. Arsenic occurs naturally in the earth's crust but can also be caused by such things as fertilizers, treated lumber and pesticides. Any exposure risk would come through ingestion of the soil.

According to information provided by the State of Minnesota (see link below), arsenic levels in the soil between 5 ppm and 20 ppm are generally viewed as safe. Samples were taken from 57 different locations on the North and East sides of the Aula. Seven of the samples were greater than 20 ppm with 6 being less than 30 ppm and the highest coming in at 42 ppm. All samples greater than 20 ppm were located on to the east of the Aula in the location that will eventually hold our new parking lot. Wenck Associates, Inc, an engineering firm, conducted the study and has submitted a detailed report with remediation recommendations to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for approval. In most cases the contaminated soil will be removed from the site. In cases of non-hazardous, low levels of contamination, some soil will be buried on site at regulated depths and covered with asphalt or concrete.

The cost of the remediation is estimated to be over \$60,000 and we have been aggressively seeking government grants to help offset the cost.

With the ground currently frozen and covered in snow along with the contaminated soil located either within the fenced construction area or on the east side of the Aula away from the playground, the risk to students is extremely small. We are acting with an abundance of caution to properly remediate the issue. The link below will provide you more information on the hazards of arsenic. If you would like a copy of the soil report and action plan to remedy the issue please email your request to construction@tcgis.org.

Finally, know that we have not tested the playground area as the soil currently lies encased under asphalt. However, when we move on to constructing our permanent playground the appropriate testing and remediation will be a part of that project.

State of Minnesota information on arsenic hazard

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/hazardous/topics/arsenic.html