



March 20, 2017

Kimberley Harrington
Acting Commissioner
Department of Education

Bob Martin
Commissioner
Department of Environmental Protection

Cathleen D. Bennett
Commissioner
Department of Health



Commissioners,

I write on behalf of the New Jersey Leadership for Educational Excellence (LEE), a coalition of stakeholders dedicated to the success of New Jersey students, which includes the leaders of these associations:



- New Jersey Association of School Administrators;
- New Jersey Association of School Business Officials;
- New Jersey Education Association;
- New Jersey Parent Teacher Association;
- New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association; and
- New Jersey School Boards Association.

The NJLEE members have learned of a health issue which might affect public school students and the adults working with them. Specifically, the hazard is mercury which is found in certain rubberized flooring materials.



Recently, the Burlington Township School District became aware of the presence of mercury in flooring when it was planning to replace a rubberized gymnasium floor installed at the B. Bernice Young School in 1994. After testing, the flooring to be removed was identified as a hazardous material due to its mercury content; it could not be placed in a regular landfill. This information resulted in the district taking proactive steps to test for mercury in the air of the gymnasium and surrounding areas of the school. **Through consultation with a Certified Industrial Hygienist and Environmental Scientist, district officials determined that there was no threat to the people who use the gymnasium on a daily basis, based on standards identified by the consultant.**



On Thursday, March 16, NJLEE representatives met with Burlington Township School District Officials; Diana Crowder, Environmental Hygienist, New Jersey Work Environment Council; and **Dr. Richard M. Lynch, President of the Environmental Safety Management Corporation**, the consultant to the Burlington Township School District. During that meeting and conversation, the NJLEE representatives learned that there are multiple standards across the states and the federal government for determining the danger of mercury vapors which might affect adults and that there are no standards for determining a danger for students. We understand that standards for adult workers in public employment have been established by the Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health division of the New Jersey Department of Health, but no such standards have been established for children and teenagers.



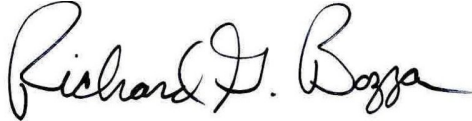
Consultants to the Burlington Township School District have estimated that there are approximately 700 similar rubberized floors existing in public schools and other public facilities. Given the potential hazard to students and adults in schools where rubberized flooring exists, the NJLEE members are requesting that guidance be issued to school district leaders throughout the state establishing a clear standard to be used to evaluate the presence of mercury in the air which poses a threat to student and adult health.

NJLEE members have alerted school district leaders to the potential hazard and will alert them as well to the specific **actions taken in the Burlington Township School District to be used as a primer when addressing concerns arising from the presence of rubberized flooring.**

NJLEE wishes to work cooperatively with personnel of your departments to assist school leaders in dealing with this concern.

Please do not hesitate to contact me as the NJLEE liaison in response to this request for assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard G. Bozza". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard G. Bozza, Ed.D.

Executive Director
New Jersey Association of School Administrators
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