



Local 502

To: William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent
School District of Philadelphia

Joyce S. Wilkerson, President,
Board of Education
School District of Philadelphia

From: Robin P. Cooper, Ed.D.
President, Teamsters Local 502: CASA

Re: Health, Safety and Environmental Issues of Our Membership

We are writing to express our deep concern with the health, safety, climate, and environmental issues of our schools and how it affects the members of Teamsters Local 502: CASA, our students, and our teachers and staff. It is not an overstatement that our schools have long-standing facilities problems. Dr. Hite, when speaking about this issue, has stated that our buildings are old. We, however, believe that with the proper maintenance, they can be safe and even beautiful.

It is the employer's responsibility - Dr. Hite and the School Board of Education - to provide workplaces that are free from hazards that may affect the health and safety of our members, as well as the entire school community, and to comply with all applicable standards and regulations, and consistent with the Pennsylvania Constitution, the District's Health and Safety Policy and Pennsylvania School Code of 1949, Section 701. Therefore, as the President/Principal Officer of Teamsters Local 502: CASA, I am placing the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) on alert that we will not tolerate the conditions at schools that are plagued with unsafe levels of asbestos, lead, and mold.

We question the capacity of SDP to address the serious hazards that we encounter today and to maintain its buildings in a safe and healthy manner. Our buildings do not have enough cleaners and building engineers. SDP does not have enough skilled workers or administrative staff to provide adequate oversight of environmental operations. In summation, we need a comprehensive system of proper assessment and maintenance of all SPD facilities.

Our requests were generated based on our experiences with the SDP where there were serious breaches of trust. We seek a collaborative and transparent process in which the SDP will share all relevant information, including but not limited to, data and testing protocol, to ensure that SDP facilities are healthy and safe.

We are requesting that the following actions are taken by the SDP immediately:

- I. Enforcement of Article 9, Sections 4 and 5, a,b.c., of Teamsters Local 502: CASA contract with regard to notification of School Administrators. (attached)
- II. A formal advance notification system for School Administrators regarding all construction and environmental work that is to be performed within school facilities, before, during, and after such work.
- III. Improvement and expansion of the SDP's environmental and facilities management and services departments, including proper training of staff, in order to better manage and provide oversight on all environmental issues and projects at SDP facilities.
- IV. A standardized process for identifying, planning, prioritizing and remediating environmental hazards so that every School Administrator knows the impact of the hazards and ensuing work on their schools.
- V. School Administrators should be provided with timely opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process concerning the closure and re-opening of schools.
- VI. School Administrators should not be held responsible by the SDP to perform environmental inspections in schools.
- VII. School Administrators should not be directed to sign letters or notices, which they did not author, concerning health and safety conditions of schools or to otherwise be directed to communicate on such matters with stakeholders.
- VIII. Evaluations of School Administrators' job performances should not occur in schools that were closed for any length of time due to environmental hazards.
- IX. School Administrators, and Teamsters Local 502/CASA officials, should have access to all data and reports, obtained and maintained by the SDP, that would impact the health and safety of our members. We should also be provided with access to qualified independent health and safety experts who can address any questions or concerns regarding the data.
- X. Any current or retired member of Teamster Local Union 502, who is diagnosed with health conditions related to environmental hazards in SDP facilities, should have their medical costs covered by SDP.
- XI. All construction and abatement/remediation work concerning environmental hazards should be started within a two-week period following the submission of the work order and completed in a timely manner.