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Housatonic Valley Health District Provides Update on Air Quality Monitoring at Quaker Farms School

The Housatonic Valley Health District (HVHD) is providing an update regarding air quality monitoring conducted at Quaker Farms School in Oxford. HVHD representatives were on site Friday with Oxford Public Schools to continue environmental monitoring. HVHD representatives will continue to be onsite in the coming days as additional testing is conducted.

Understanding Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) in Schools

Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is a normal component of both indoor and outdoor air and is produced naturally when people breathe. In classroom settings, where exhaled air is typically the largest source of CO_2, monitoring CO_2 levels can help indicate whether outdoor air ventilation may be inadequate.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) *Reference Guide for Indoor Air Quality in Schools*, the upper limit for occupied classrooms is "usually around 1,000 ppm." Importantly, this upper limit is **not a health effects level**. Rather, it is based on ASHRAE Standard 62-2001, which is designed to maintain ventilation at a level "to prevent body odor levels from being offensive," as referenced in the EPA's Appendix E: Carbon Dioxide.

Workplace safety standards established by OSHA set a permissible exposure limit of 5,000 ppm as an eight-hour time-weighted average.

Recent Monitoring Results

The most recent test results, collected Friday afternoon by Professional Cleaning and Restoration Systems (linked here), and reviewed by several independent agencies indicate:

- CO_2 levels in all areas tested were below 1,100 ppm
- Two readings exceeded 1,000 ppm
- All readings remained well below occupational safety thresholds

Testing completed by EnviroMed on February 22nd is linked here.

Additional testing by both Professional Cleaning and Restoration Systems and EnviroMed will continue this week and next in order to ensure comprehensive data collection.

HVHD remains committed to transparency and will provide additional updates as further analysis is completed. Protecting the health and safety of students, staff, and families remains our highest priority.

HVHD®
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