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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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# Housatonic Valley Health District Provides Additional Air Quality Update for Quaker Farms School

The Housatonic Valley Health District (HVHD) is providing another update regarding air quality monitoring conducted at Quaker Farms School in Oxford, including findings from testing observed on March 6, 2026 and March 9, 2026, and detailed in the Professional Cleaning and Restoration Systems $CO_2$ Snapshot Monitoring Log and the EnviroMed Services Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Report (Project # IH-26-10146).

For ease of review, all $CO_2$ findings to date have been compiled here.

## March 6th Carbon Dioxide ($CO_2$) Monitoring Results

On March 6th a total of 60 $CO_2$ readings were collected by Professional Cleaning and Restoration Systems. Of these readings:

- **54 readings** were below 1,100 parts per million (ppm)
- **6 readings** were above 1,100 ppm, including:
  - 3 readings between 1,100–1,200 ppm
  - 2 reading between 1,200–1,300 ppm
  - 1 reading (the highest recorded) was 1357 ppm

Per ASHRAE Standard 62-2001, *Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality*, the difference between indoor and outdoor $CO_2$ concentrations should be less than 700-707 ppm. Based on the March 6th data, **four readings surpassed this threshold**.

## March 9th Carbon Dioxide ($CO_2$) Monitoring Results

On March 9th a total of 70 $CO_2$ readings were collected by EnviroMed. Of these readings:

- **64 readings** were below 1,100 parts per million (ppm)
- **6 readings** were above 1,100 ppm, including:
  - 3 readings between 1,100–1,200 ppm
  - 3 readings between 1,200–1,300 ppm

Per ASHRAE Standard 62-2001, *Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality*, the difference between indoor and outdoor $CO_2$ concentrations should be less than 700-707 ppm. Based on the March 9th data, **six readings surpassed this threshold**.

## Regulatory and Guidance Context

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) do not set mandatory, legally binding $CO_2$ limits for classrooms. Instead, the EPA recommends following ASHRAE standards, which are industry-accepted guidelines for HVAC system design, energy efficiency, and indoor air quality.

The EPA's *Reference Guide for Indoor Air Quality in Schools* notes that ASHRAE Standard 62-2001 recommends maintaining $CO_2$ concentrations at no more than **700-707 ppm above outdoor levels** in occupied classrooms. Importantly, this recommendation is intended to maintain ventilation sufficient "to prevent body odor levels from being offensive" and is **not a health effects threshold**.

This 700-707 differential often translates to around 1,000 ppm, however, as it is based on outdoor $CO_2$ concentration, it may at times be higher. This is due to the fact that outdoor $CO_2$ levels fluctuate based on various factors, with levels generally higher in the winter. The outdoor baseline recorded on March 4th by Professional Cleaning and Restoration Systems was 478 (average of three readings taken), the outdoor baseline recorded on March 5th by Professional Cleaning and Restoration Systems was 464 (average of three readings), and 446 as recorded by EnviroMed.

For additional perspective:

- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) permissible exposure limit for $CO_2$ is **5,000 ppm (0.5%)** as an 8-hour time-weighted average
- $CO_2$ levels above 2,000 ppm in office buildings and classrooms are not uncommon in certain conditions, though higher levels may indicate reduced ventilation effectiveness
- Although $CO_2$ concentrations of 400–3000 ppm typically seen in indoor environments does not pose a health hazard, there is some evidence with respect to office workers and school children that at ventilation levels leading to $CO_2$ concentrations above ~2000ppm for extended periods occupants may feel slightly drowsy and their cognitive performance may be decreased (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S295036202500030X)

## Baseline Mold Report

On March 5, 2026, EnviroMed additionally conducted a comprehensive mold inspection at Quaker Farms School. The full results of this report can be found here. Air samples were collected throughout the building, and samples were analyzed by an accredited laboratory and compared to outdoor baseline levels.

The assessment found **no evidence of elevated airborne mold levels inside the school**. The types of fungal spores identified are commonly present in normal indoor and outdoor environments, and the report found **no airborne toxigenic mold** in the areas tested. Based on the results of the testing conducted, the building was determined to be **fit for occupancy**.

It is important to note that there are currently **no federal or Connecticut regulatory standards for mold levels in indoor air**, so environmental professionals typically compare indoor samples to outdoor conditions to determine whether abnormal mold growth is present. In this case, indoor levels were consistent with outdoor background conditions.

HVHD will continue to work with Oxford Public Schools to ensure that any environmental concerns raised by staff, students, or families are addressed promptly and appropriately.

Please reach out to us with any questions: inbox@hvhdct.gov

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