Contact:
Housatonic Valley Health District (HVHD)
inbox@hvhdct.gov

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

The Housatonic Valley Health District (HVHD) is providing an additional update regarding air quality monitoring conducted at Quaker Farms School in Oxford, including findings from testing on March 23, 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-26-1294).

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

March 23rd Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) Monitoring Results

On March 23rd a total of 139 combined CO_2 readings were collected by Professional Cleaning and Restoration Systems and EnviroMed. Of these readings:

- **139 readings** were below 1,100 parts per million (ppm)
- **0 readings** were above 1,100 ppm, including:

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 16th data, **there were no readings that 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.

For additional perspective:

- An informative powerpoint presentation compiled by EnviroMed Services may be found here
- 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)

Recent air quality readings at the school have shown significant improvement, which is an encouraging development. As a local health department, HVHD does not conduct comparative analyses across other schools or institutions statewide. As such, HVHD is not in a position to characterize these conditions relative to other facilities. The district's focus remains on evaluating site-specific data and continuing to support ongoing monitoring and improvements where needed.

Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns including any reported sustained experience of headaches, dizziness, and fatigue: inbox@hvhdct.gov. If you have experienced any of these symptoms, please visit your doctor.

HVHD®
Housatonic Valley Health District
77 Main St N, Suite 205 | Southbury, CT 06488
10 Main St | New Milford, CT 06776
T 203.264.9616 | F 203.262.1960 | hvhd.us