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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 update regarding air quality monitoring conducted at Quaker Farms School in Oxford, including findings from testing observed by representatives from HVHD on March 3, 2026, and detailed in the EnviroMed Services Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Report (Project # IH-26-981) and the Professional Cleaning and Restoration Systems CO_2 Snapshot Monitoring Log.

HVHD staff were onsite March 3rd to observe air quality testing conducted by two independent environmental companies and to continue oversight of environmental conditions within the building. For ease of review, the findings from both companies have been compiled here.

March 3rd Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) Monitoring Results

On March 3rd a total of 104 combined CO_2 readings were collected by the companies. Of these readings:

- **90 readings** were below 1,100 parts per million (ppm)
- **14 readings** were above 1,100 ppm, including:
  - 8 readings between 1,100–1,200 ppm
  - 2 readings between 1,200–1,300 ppm
  - 4 readings between 1,300–1,470 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 3rd data, **one reading surpassed this threshold**.

Regulatory and Guidance Context

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does 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 3rd by EnviroMed was 615 ppm.

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)

Ongoing Monitoring and HVAC Improvements

Due to a weather-related early dismissal on the day of testing, some monitoring occurred during reduced occupancy, with 19 of the 59 spaces tested unoccupied during EnviroMed's monitoring. HVHD is continuing to coordinate with Oxford Public Schools to conduct additional testing under full classroom occupancy conditions through the remainder of this week and into early next week.

HVHD will continue working with school officials as the new HVAC system comes online to monitor its impact on ventilation effectiveness and overall indoor air quality.

To help reduce indoor CO_2 levels where needed, recommended measures include:

- Increasing outdoor air supply through HVAC adjustments
- Opening windows when feasible
- Utilizing fans to enhance air circulation

We will additionally be working with school representatives to review reported student absences and illness-related student dismissals as compared to other schools within the district.

HVHD remains committed to ongoing oversight, transparent communication, and collaboration with school officials to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for students and staff.

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