



ANDOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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Superintendent of Schools

September 3, 2020

Dear APS faculty and staff,

I would like to address the photographs which emerged on social media on Tuesday. These photos were taken from the inside of various schools and classrooms and do not reflect the conditions we expect for our staff and students.

To offer some clarity, most of photographs are of the interior of exhaust grills which pull air out of the spaces and are not air supply. The outside of these grills are cleaned by custodians regularly and if there is an issue with the internal part of the exhaust grill, the custodians or the front office of any school may call the Work Control Center at 978-623-8888 so the town's Department of Facilities can respond and remedy the situation. Work orders are an important way the Department of Facilities tracks and identifies ongoing issues.

In the next few days, the Department of Facilities will be working overtime to inspect and address all of the exhaust vents at the Andover Schools, starting with AHS, West Elementary and South School. The plan is to remove the vent covers and clean behind them if needed.

Under the APS pest management policy [EBAB](#), APS retains a pest management company regularly to inspect our schools and provides eradication measures. All schools have the pest management company in monthly, except the high school, which is inspected every two weeks. Non-emergency pest issues are logged in a book which is checked by the pest control vendor and addressed on their monthly visit. If pest management issues are urgent the custodian or front office can call the Department of Facilities Work Control Center for immediate action.

West Elementary has had the pest management provider in every month and AHS regularly calls for the pest management company to handle issues as they are identified. The district has called for additional visits during the next three months to mitigate any remaining issues.

One of the photographs of rodent feces that was published was of an area that had not been utilized for a long time and was only identified as a result of moving of furniture that had been in place for years. Previously, APS custodians were instructed not to move or disturb teacher materials and furniture, creating areas that are not accessible. Starting today, custodians will be instructed to move teacher belongings to adequately disinfect and clean classrooms.

About APS: The mission of the Andover Public Schools, in partnership with the entire Andover community, is to educate by engaging and inspiring students to develop as self-reliant, responsible citizens who are thinkers, problem solvers, and contributors prepared to participate in an evolving global society.

Custodians are available to handle any issues found throughout the day. Custodians will continue to work to clean and disinfect according to guidelines. Our 40 custodians have worked almost 560 hours of overtime in the past three months to ready the 1.1 million square feet of school space. In recent weeks, the School Committee approved the employment posting for a custodial supervisor and three additional custodians. The supervisor will lead this team and provide hands-on structure and best practices.

After touring our buildings, I believe our custodial staff has done a good job of preparing our buildings. Although the pictures on social media represent incidents that are the exception, they are disturbing to see.

I expect our buildings to be clean and sanitary for our educators and our students. I apologize to those entering their buildings on Tuesday where this might not have been the case and for any concern this might have caused the community as we prepare to return to school.



Steve Nembirkow

Chief Operations Officer
Andover Public Schools