



## Ventilation and Air Quality in Our Schools

October 4, 2022

Recently, we have received several questions from staff, families, and a media outlet, asking us to detail our efforts at maintaining optimal air quality in our schools. We understand the concern and the need for reassurance from our students and employees – that as a school system, we are taking prudent measures to promote a safe and healthy learning environment.

We want to take the opportunity to describe here – again – all the strategies we currently employ to promote a safe air quality in our buildings. This includes:

- Following the consensus advice of public health experts
- Meeting public health authority regulations
- Partnering with [PBS Engineering and Environmental](#), one of the Northwest's top environmental engineering firms
- Continuously reviewing our systems and making improvements with the help of PBS and public health experts

We are heartened that the Oregon Health Authority has appreciated our “steps that improve indoor air quality in schools,” and that PBS's experts have determined that, “PPS buildings are safe...”

In considering the safety of our school communities, we look at several factors:

- The equipment in our buildings, and how we maintain it for optimum performance
- The portable equipment that can improve air filtration, and how we maintain it for optimum performance
- The quantity of outside air we can pull in
- The airflow patterns in our buildings
- The temperature and humidity we can expect, and how variations and changes might affect airflow

We agree that how often air changes in a room is one important factor. That's why we sought guidance from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) about how often air should change per hour. They have now [responded with a recommendation](#) – three to six changes per hour – but underscored that it should go “along with the implementation of other best practices.” OHA stressed that air changes per hour is just “one tool in the toolkit,” and it specifically cautioned that, “Having a lower number of air changes does not mean an automatically increased risk of disease transmission.”

OHA's core recommendation is a “layered mitigation approach,” and [ours includes](#):

- Every PPS learning space has a portable filter
- We've upgraded our building filters
- HVAC systems are proactively inspected quarterly by outside, independent experts
- A long term plan to improve air quality in all buildings, including investing \$75 million in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems over the next several years

Our Board's Facilities and Operations subcommittee also [took up this topic](#) on September 22, where staff presented about our work to ensure air quality.

We remain committed to continuously reviewing all available guidance to promote a safe and healthy learning environment for our community.

*Forward Together,*

Dan Jung  
Chief Operating Officer

Jonathan Garcia  
Chief of Staff

Dr. Jon Franco  
Chief of Schools

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