Wayne County Schools

Frequently Asked Questions: CK Elementary Air Quality Report

Wayne County Schools obtained a full air quality assessment report for Ceredo-Kenova Elementary, prepared by Pinnacle Consultants. This was done to identify any air quality issues and to ensure that remediation efforts addressed all issues. Because parts of the report use technical or lab-standard language that can be easy to misread, in consultation with our remediation company, we've put together this plain-language guide to go alongside it.

It is important to note that remediation efforts began immediately upon receipt of the report.

We encourage you to read the full report yourself. This FAQ isn't a substitute for it — it's here to help make sense of a few specific sections that tend to cause confusion. The complete report is posted alongside this FAQ.

Q: What is this report, and why was it done?

CK Elementary has an issue with water penetration from the outside of the building. To get an independent, professional picture of how that has affected indoor air quality, we hired Pinnacle Consultants, an environmental testing firm, to sample air and surfaces throughout the school and send the results to an accredited lab.

Q: What did the testing actually find?

Elevated levels of a few common environmental molds (Chaetomium, Cladosporium, Curvularia, and Pithomyces) in specific locations, some active mold growth on a few surfaces behind walls and vents, HVAC vents that needed cleaning, and ventilation levels below where they should be in several rooms. The report notes that overall airborne mold levels across the building did not indicate widespread contamination.

Q: I saw the report mention "toxic black mold" and "brain damage" — was that found at our school?

No. This is the single most important thing to clarify. That language appears in a standard reference table Pinnacle includes in every report it issues, describing mold types in general — it is not a finding from our building. The mold it's describing, Stachybotrys (the mold sometimes nicknamed "black mold"), was not detected anywhere in the CK Elementary testing. If you see that phrase, it's being pulled from general reference material, not from anything found in our school.

Q: What about mycotoxins? I saw that word next to Chaetomium, which was actually found.

Chaetomium, one of the molds that was found, is listed in the report's general reference table with a note that some species in that family have the potential to produce mycotoxins. This describes a characteristic of the mold family in general — it does not mean mycotoxins were detected. No mycotoxin testing was performed as part of this assessment. Chaetomium was identified in one location, Room 212, at a level the lab flagged as slightly elevated.

Q: What does "active fungal growth" mean? That sounds serious.

In a few tape-lift (surface) samples, the lab noted the presence of hyphae — the thread-like structures that make up an active mold colony, as opposed to mold spores that simply settled out of the air. In plain terms: on a few specific surfaces behind walls and vents, mold was actively growing rather than just present as dust-like spores. This is exactly the kind of finding remediation is designed to address, and it's part of why crews are removing and treating those specific materials rather than just cleaning the air.

Q: My child's room number is/isn't listed in the report — does that mean it's fine / it's contaminated?

The rooms named in the mold findings (212, 190, 182, and 169) are where elevated mold was specifically identified through testing. Separately, several other rooms (231, 238, 224, 217, 212) showed ventilation (CO_2) readings outside the recommended range. The original assessment sampled a representative cross-section of rooms rather than individually testing every classroom, so a room not named in either list simply wasn't part of the testing sample — it doesn't necessarily mean testing confirmed it was unaffected. To address this, every room in the building, tested or not, has been cleaned and remediated as a precaution.

Q: What do the CO_2 numbers mean? Some of them look really high.

CO_2 isn't measured because it's dangerous at these levels — it's a standard proxy for how well a room is ventilated. People exhale CO_2, and in a well-ventilated room, fresh air keeps it close to outdoor levels (around 370 parts per million, the report's outdoor reading). The recommended indoor guideline is outdoor levels plus 700 ppm, so under about 1,070 ppm. A handful of rooms tested meaningfully above that guideline, pointing to those rooms needing more fresh-air exchange, not to any kind of air toxicity or gas leak. Since remediation began, our HVAC contractor has monitored CO_2 levels throughout the building and reports that all rooms are now within the recommended range. Our remediation contractor is separately conducting independent retesting to confirm these results and to continue monitoring air quality going forward.

Q: The report says there are no state or federal standards for mold — why not, and what does that mean for us?

This is standard, accurate industry language, not something specific to our situation. There currently are no federal or West Virginia numerical exposure standards for mold, because individual sensitivity to mold varies so much and the science doesn't support a single universal threshold. This is true of every mold assessment report, for every building, nationwide. It doesn't mean there's no accountability here — it means test results are interpreted by comparing indoor levels to outdoor levels and by identifying specific problem areas, which is exactly what this report did.

Q: How worried should I be about my child's health?

The large majority of people will not notice any effects from this kind of exposure. If your child (or you) has asthma, allergies, or a weakened immune system and is experiencing symptoms, please notify the school so we can follow up, and consider checking in with your doctor.

Q: What is the district doing about it?

We've reported air quality testing to the West Virginia Department of Education and remediation efforts to the School Building Authority as we pursue a long-term fix. CSI Contractors has been hired to lead a full restoration effort targeting the water intrusion at its source, following professional (IICRC S520) remediation standards with HEPA filtration and proper containment. While the original assessment tested a representative sample of rooms, cleaning and remediation have been carried out throughout the entire building as a precaution. Work began immediately, and the identified issues have been addressed; our contractor is now conducting independent retesting to confirm those results, and we will release additional air quality testing results as they become available. The library requires more extensive work and will remain closed to students and staff until that work is complete. We will notify families when the work is finished.

Q: Who do I contact with questions?

Please reach out to the Superintendent's office at 304-272-3332.