

School big talk ABCs of PCBs

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Bates for News

Dangerous PCBs were found in the front-door caulking at Public School 86.

Leaders at a [Briarwood](#) school where a Daily News investigation found toxic chemicals met with city officials Monday to address concerns that children there might suffer effects from exposure.

Polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, were found in the front-door caulking at [Public School 86](#) on Parsons Blvd., and may also affect as many as 38 other schools in the borough.

At a news conference in front of PS 86, City Councilman James Gennaro ([D-Fresh Meadows](#)) demanded city officials immediately test all schools that may have toxin-laden caulking - generally those built between 1960 and 1978.

Hours later, city officials arrived for a meeting with school administrators and parents.

"The [Department of Education](#) came out," confirmed [Nizell Gomez](#), a parent association member. She declined to say more about the visit but noted that city officials allayed her concerns.

But other parents said they were still in the dark.

"I'm concerned, like any parent would be," said [Steven Martin](#), 47.

The former parent association president said he knew nothing of a meeting, announcement or handout from the school.

"I haven't heard anything yet," he said. "Overall, the school is very good about communicating with the parents."

Martin said he feared for the health of his son, Christopher, 9.

"The school is supposed to care about the students that go there. I hope they do something about it immediately," he said.

School officials said Tuesday that air and dust tests at the school found no detectable PCBs.

Laboratory tests requested by The News found 518 parts per million of the toxin in caulking from the school - an amount 10 times greater than the federal threshold.

The city's air tests detected PCBs in only one of the six schools citywide discovered to have PCBs in The News' lab tests.

City officials said they do not plan to conduct air quality or dust tests at the remaining 38 [Queens](#) schools where the caulking could contain PCBs.

"There's not going to be pre-emptive testing," said Education Department spokesman [David Cantor](#). "We're going to take out the caulk whenever there's any renovation work being done in the school, and if we discover in other ways if there's any determination of damaging levels. But we don't plan to test any [additional] school" that could have toxic caulking.

Cantor noted the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) - which could fine the city \$25,000 per day until PCBs are removed - did not have rules requiring the city to do testing.

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