

May 18, 2021

Richard Best

Director, Capital Projects and Planning
Seattle School District

Dear Mr. Best:

We are writing to you on behalf of a large number of staff at Lafayette Elementary to voice concern about current plans for construction work at our school. The plan set to begin May 20, 2021 includes earthquake retrofitting and the replacement of our boiler and duct system. This project also includes asbestos abatement.

On Thursday, May 13, 2021, the Lafayette staff and school community were given the first notice of the complete scope of this work. Immediately concerns were raised about the timing of the project, which is scheduled to begin with five weeks left in the current school year. These concerns stem from lack of prior communication about this project and the inclusion of asbestos abatement in our building while it is occupied by students and staff.

We met with Thomas Gut and Rich Carlson in a meeting about the project on Friday, May 14, 2021 to discuss our concerns. The result of this meeting was to grant us an additional week before construction and asbestos abatement would proceed.

Our staff met again on Monday, May 17, 2021 to discuss this situation. It is the request of a large number of our staff, based on review of the project, that this work be postponed either until the current school year ends or until a time that our school community can be relocated to an interim site while this work is being done. We take this stand because we do not feel safe working and teaching in a building where asbestos is being disturbed.

We understand the problems our request makes as far as commitment to contractors, supply orders, and the readiness of our building to reopen in the upcoming 2021-22 school year. However, we cannot endorse a plan that has any risk to students or staff. Despite assurances otherwise, the only way to guarantee that this construction poses no risk to children is to make sure there are no children on site while construction is being done.

We respectfully request that work at Lafayette Elementary be postponed until all students and staff are absent from the site. Your response to this request is of the utmost importance to our students and our staff.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. We are open to dialog and problem solving around this issue. We urge you to work with us to modify the timeline of the construction at Lafayette for the health and safety of our learning community.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Adams, Tina McDonald, Regina Baleto-Ferguson, Michael Nelson,
Loretta Joseph, Nicole Bajaj, Astrid Peterson, Rhonda Gonzalez
Alden Alvarado, Lafayette PTSA President