June 24, 2009

Dear Parents, Guardians, Students, Faculty and Staff,

The health and safety of our students, faculty and staff is a top priority for Bay District Schools and specifically for the Tyndall Elementary School.

Background — As you may know, the Tyndall Elementary School was constructed in the 1950s on a portion of Tyndall Air Force Base (AFB) that was used as a shotgun range in the 1940s to train aerial gunners during World War II. In 2000, the Center for Disease Control's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) evaluated lead in soil at the school. In past years, studies have been conducted to determine if levels of lead materials present upon the school grounds presented any risk. Results of these studies have previously indicated no health hazard.

Issue — However, in May 2009, additional sampling was conducted at our school by Tyndall AFB as a result of a Department of Defense directed firing range cleanup program. These samples indicate lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in several areas were above residential screening levels. PAHs are associated with the clay targets used during the training. Attached is information regarding the contaminants found at our school.

Who is affected? — In response to these new sampling results, Tyndall AFB provided notifications to the various regulatory agencies and has requested ATSDR to take another look to determine if a health hazard exists. ATSDR states that "Children and adults who play or work at various outside locations at the Tyndall Elementary School may have been exposed to lead by accidentally eating lead after getting lead containing soil on their hands and then touching their mouth or eating food with unwashed hands, intentionally eating soil containing lead, or lead pellets, or breathing lead in kicked-up dirt or soil."

What is the concern? — Although the average amount of lead and PAHs in soil at the school is not likely to be a health hazard, there are areas with higher levels. Our main concern is that children may find lead shot or remnants of skeet interesting, and may be more likely to pick up and play with the material increasing their contact and thus risk for harm.

What is being done? — As a precautionary measure, the 325th Fighter Wing commander has initiated a project to remove up to 2 feet of soil from the playground and other associated areas where levels exceed standards for residential or school land use and replace it with clean soil. This project is expected to begin in the next few weeks to ensure soil removal is completed prior to school resuming in August. Until this project begins, fencing has been erected to restrict student access to affected areas of the campus. Additionally, students present during the summer will not be using the playgrounds. We will be providing you with updated information as it becomes available.

What should I do? To address the concerns of parents, ATSDR recommends having your young child's blood lead level checked. The Bay County Health Department will be providing screening for children with no military affiliation and the Tyndall clinical laboratory will be screening military dependent children.

We have attached informational flyers to this letter that provide detailed information regarding risks associated with exposure to lead and PAHs. The flyers outline procedures for accessing medical screening and provide contact numbers for both the Bay County and Tyndall AFB public health agencies.

We are currently working with the Air Force, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the ATSDR, and the Bay County Health Department to ensure a safe and healthy environment is maintained for our children.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our public health and regulatory partners listed in Attachment 1.

Sincerely,

Libbie Pippin

LIBBIE PIPPIN
Principal, Tyndall Elementary

Daryl L. Roberson

DARRYL L. ROBERSON, Brig Gen, USAF
Commander

3 Attchs:
1. Contaminants/Contact Information
2. Lead Trifold
3. PAH Trifold