

FAQ

Transition from Codwell Elementary to Rhoads Elementary

What is happening?

Codwell Elementary is being relocated to a vacant school building at 4103 Brisbane. The building was most recently known as Inspired for Excellence Academy, a charter school that had leased the facility from HISD. Within HISD, the school is known as Rhoads Elementary.

Why is this move necessary?

Mold was recently found behind the walls of the school. It was discovered this summer during the removal of portions of the corridor walls as part of the foundation repairs at Codwell. A professional consultant was called out to investigate, and unfortunately mold was found in other areas of the school as well. HISD's Construction and Facility Services (CFS) has engaged a licensed subcontractor to remove the mold, and all the cleanup work is being closely monitored by CFS. Additional repairs are being done to prevent any future moisture problems at Codwell, including grading around the school to keep water away from the foundation.

What is mold and why does it grow?

Mold is a member of the fungi family, which reproduce by releasing spores (seeds) into the air that settle on surfaces. Under the right conditions the spores grow into mold colonies. Too much moisture or humidity will create the conditions for mold to grow. There is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in the indoor environment. The way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture.

What molds were found at Coldwell?

At Coldwell, the three most commonly identified molds from indoor samples taken between June 26 and July 3 were *Aspergillus/Penicillium*, *Basidiospores* and *Cladosporium*. Sampling conducted outside for comparison purposes also found *Aspergillus/Penicillium*, *Basidiospores* and *Cladosporium* were the most prevalent. Among other molds found in the school were *Ascospores*, *Stachybotrys*, *Tetraploa*, *Myxomycetes*, *Curvularia*, and *Alternaria* at rates of 8 percent or less. All molds found at Codwell were located behind walls and remained undisturbed until structural repairs to the foundation started this summer. After discovery, an assessment was promptly conducted throughout the facility and in each wing of the school. Additional water damage and visible mold were found in others areas of the building not normally accessible to students, including a leaky sink in the staff lounge, on the sills of some open windows, on storage area wall and within the wall cavities of other wings. The sampling that took place from June 26 through July 3 was conducted when the building was vacant and after the mold had been disturbed by construction work. In addition, doors and windows throughout the facility were open to facilitate the ongoing work. This construction traffic, as well as open doors and windows, may have influenced the sample results by permitting mold from outside the building to enter the sample areas. The samples do not represent an accurate picture of mold levels during the school year, only during the summer assessment period.

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What steps is the district taking to remediate the problem?

The health and safety of Codwell staff and students are our top priorities. The decision to relocate Codwell was made to ensure that the cleanup of mold at the school does not present a health risk. The district is working with Southern Global, a firm licensed by the state to conduct mold assessments, to ensure the cleanup follows all best practices (http://www.epa.gov/mold/mold_remediation.html) and that the moisture problem that permitted the mold to grow is repaired. We will continue to update the Codwell community on the progress of the cleanup.

Does this mold pose a health hazard to students or staff?

It is important to note that as long as the mold remained undisturbed behind the walls, it did not pose a health hazard to students or staff. But as construction began at the facility this summer and materials were removed to facilitate the structural repairs, we saw the potential for the mold spores to become airborne. For that reason, we have decided to relocate the school as we finish all the structural repairs and remove the mold.

How long will Codwell students be housed at the 4103 Brisbane location?

Our priority is to do what is best for our students, so we are planning to be at the new facility for the first semester. If we decide that it will be too disruptive to move back to Codwell over the winter break, we will stay at the new campus for the rest of the year.

Will my student receive transportation to attend Codwell at Rhoads?

Yes. Any student who wants transportation will be able to receive transportation. Bus schedules will be available the week of Aug. 18.

Why was Rhoads selected as a temporary campus for Codwell? Were there other options?

The district looked at a variety of alternatives before recommending this plan. After a thorough review, this option was selected as the best solution for the Codwell community. Rhoads Elementary is less than two miles away from Codwell. In addition, because Rhoads was recently used as a school, it already meets many of the codes and requirements.

Where will students be registered for the new school year?

We are asking new Codwell families register their students at Rhoads Elementary at 4103 Brisbane starting August 12. If you already registered, or have a current student, you do not need to register again.

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Will there be any renovations or upgrades to Rhoads this summer to accommodate the Codwell students?

The facility will need some technology and air conditioning upgrades, as well as some other maintenance items. Our goal is to have all of this work done by the start of the school year on August 25.

I'm not comfortable with this plan and no longer want my child to attend Codwell. Are there any other options?

We hope that you choose to stay in our Codwell community. However, HISD is a district of choice with a variety of educational options available to our students. Families who want to look at additional options and programs should contact the HISD School Choice Office at 713-556-6947. Please note that the district allows only one transfer per year.