



MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2023

Contact: George Sells

Director of Communications and Marketing

Saint Louis Public Schools

George.Sells@slps.org

314-332-7035, cell

SLPS Board to Vote to Replace Miles of Chain Link Fencing to Remove Lead Contaminate

District Continues to Set the Pace in Environmental Standards

St. Louis, MO -- On Tuesday, June 13, the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis will vote to award contracts for the removal and replacement of approximately 6.2 miles of chain link fencing across targeted Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS).

If approved, the district will remove the chain link and install environmentally safe, vinyl coated galvanized steel fencing; a \$2 million project made possible by a combination of state and federal funds. The project's inclusion in House Bill 20 (HB20), which provides for infrastructure and other improvements across the state, was championed by Senator Steve Roberts, and Representative LaKeysha Bosley. The remainder of funds came from the federal government's Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III).

Since 2007, SLPS has been one of the nation's leading school districts in identifying, testing, and preventing lead hazards within and around school buildings. The District's homegrown "Lead Hazard Reduction Program," is the only plan of its kind in Missouri designed to test, train, and mitigate lead and was recently adopted as the new standard for the State of Missouri.

According to Board Vice President Matt Davis, "We are extremely grateful to our community and to our advocates in the state legislature whose support has allowed us to undertake this project. It's the kind of challenge that districts with newer buildings will not have to face. HB20 provided \$800,000 for the removal of fencing containing lead paint and ESSER III funds will pay for the replacement fencing."

Davis says, the fence discussion, was linked to conversations around the lead water bill. "Jeffrey Faust, principal of Environmental Consultant, LLC, leads our environmental efforts and testified in Jefferson City on why SLPS standards and best practices are higher than required. As a result, the SLPS remediation process and schedule is now state standard."

About the fencing, Faust explained, "You will find lead in backyards across the City and schoolyards are not exempt. The important thing is to know the levels and provide remediation or grass covering as necessary, which is how we started in 2020."

-more-



Page Two

He added, “Many historic buildings do contain lead in areas that would be impossible to completely eliminate, including miles of iron and chain link fencing you find at SLPS. Even so, we conducted lead testing along with removal and replacement of the dirt around fencing as a containment strategy.”

The recommendation to the district, Faust said, was to preserve what could be made safe (encased with paint) and to remove fencing that was too difficult to clean or too expensive to make safe. He said, “The historic wrought iron throughout the district is structurally sound and it made sense to paint over it. The chain link, however, would pose an ongoing maintenance and safety issue and the cost would be prohibitive to try to maintain it.”

In April of 2020, the Board approved a contract with Deep Kleen & Maintenance, LLC to provide lead renovation, repair, and painting services for wrought iron fences at 33 SLPS schools at a cost of \$308,000. That work, which was completed in July of 2020, included removing and replacing any contaminated dirt around the fencing, cleaning away paint chips and painting over the iron. The work should last about ten years Faust said.

In addition, the district will plant green space and extend play surfaces and asphalt areas which will also help contain any soil issues. The installation of the new chain link fencing, this summer, will bring phase II work to a close. The District will continue to monitor and paint wrought iron for safety and to preserve historical integrity to these public buildings.

Not only is the district setting standards on lead safety, but Faust also says SLPS is ahead of the new water standards due to take effect next summer. “SLPS has been testing water since 2017 and are below even the newest requirements of 5 pts. per billion (ppb) of lead,” he said.

In addition, water bottle filling stations will be installed on each floor in every school at a total cost of \$2,507,406. Districtwide, ESSER III funds are also being used to advance air quality through upgrades in building automation (i.e., controls); HVAC equipment upgrades (chillers, boilers, water cooling towers, roof top units, energy recovery units); filter changes; duct cleaning; and more.

A complete and comprehensive environmental presentation was made to the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis on April 13, 2021. You will find this board meeting posted at slps.org/virtualboe.