



York Catholic District School Board

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A Message from the York Catholic District School Board Radon Testing in YCDSB Schools

The York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) passed a motion at its Regular Meeting of the Board on August 26, 2014 to initiate presumptive Radon testing in all YCDSB buildings. Radon testing will begin in all schools and YCDSB office buildings before the end of this month. It is important to note that there is no evidence to suggest Radon testing is needed in our schools; this initiative is a positive and proactive measure, which underscores the Board's commitment to the safety and well-being of students and staff throughout the YCDSB.

Radon is a radioactive gas that is formed naturally by the breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. As a gas, Radon is slowly released from the ground, water, and some building materials that contain very small amounts of uranium (such as concrete, bricks and tiles). Radon cannot be detected by the senses -- it is colourless, odourless and tasteless; however, it can be detected with special instruments.

November has been established as Radon Action Month across Canada. The National Radon Action Campaign is led by the Ontario Lung Association with support from Health Canada. The purpose of this campaign is to raise awareness about Radon and encourage Canadians to take action by testing for Radon in order to reduce exposure. More information about Radon and this campaign can be found at: <http://www.takeactiononradon.ca/about-campaign>.

To complete this work, the Board has partnered with a consulting firm that has expertise in Radon testing. One Radon monitoring unit will be placed in every school across the Board for a 90-day period. Radon concentrations are usually higher in winter than in summer, and this is why the Board has initiated its testing at this time. Doors and windows are typically closed, and the intake of outdoor air is reduced.

The consulting firm will provide Radon test kits, analyze the Radon units upon retrieval, and will provide a report regarding the results of the analysis. The monitoring units will be placed in the schools by YCDSB staff in accordance with the Radon industry recommended placement protocol. Regular school routines will not be interrupted throughout this process.

At the end of the 90-day monitoring period, the units will be retrieved by Board staff and forwarded to the consulting firm for analysis. The YCDSB will share the results of its testing in the early spring.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Plant Department at the York Catholic District School Board at 905.713.1211 ext. 12340.