

# (Henry) School Asbestos Action Group Meeting Minutes

4.28.23

**IMPORTANT:** Folks can join this group using the BAND app:

<https://band.us/band/91005011/member>

## **Agenda:**

1. Welcome
2. Agreements
3. Breakout groups
4. Update from Christi Clark (Henry parent, community organizer) on current advocacy efforts
5. Update from Reggie Streater (Henry parent and School Board President)
6. Brainstorming + formation of working groups
7. Closing

## **Action Items:**

- **Add your name to any working group you'd like to be part of on our [spreadsheet](#)**
- **Add additional working groups if there's one you'd like to create**
- **Spread the word to get other families involved**
- **Meet again next week to check in and keep the momentum going**

## **Notes:**

1. **Christi Clark** - Union and Community Organizer (has worked in SDP)
  - Links for background information:
    - <https://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Toxic-Schools-What-Parents-Need-to-Know.pdf>
    - <https://www.inquirer.com/news/ing/toxic-city-philadelphia-inquirer-investigation-lead-asbestos-schools-20170618.html>
  - Our City, Our Schools platform has a number of demands connected to asbestos and lead-free schools: <http://ourcityourschools.com>
  - Teachers from Mitchell, Frankford and Building 21 -- starting a teacher petition. Looking to make connections with teachers at Henry.
  - May 1st: May Day rally in Harrisburg. One focus is school funding. Rep Brooks is doing lobby visits that day regarding school funding.
  - School District wide call from 6:00-7:30

- Philly Student Union, Youth United For Change -- student organizing groups - Christi has a call out to them
- Parent group: Lift Every Voice (mostly in West Philly) - Christi has a call out to them

## 2. **Reggie Streater:**

- Estimated time for work will be done and he says that virtual will not go on in perpetuity
- District has allocated \$24 million for asbestos remediation and are making concerted efforts -- finding things that should have been remediated years ago
- “Not a Frankford level problem at Henry”
  - From the chat: “Because it is a fluid situation, I can say is that the repairs and process is looking good. The District is working at a feverish pace to ensure that the remediation will be within the two weeks as was originally communicated. At this point, it does not appear to be a Frankford level event.”
- District is trying to have a swing space program for any and all schools who close. But in NW Philly, most schools are full and they are still looking for swing space here
- Shouldn't have rolling closures in perpetuity

## 3. **Other Notes:**

- PSSAs might happen the minute we reopen school -- could affect test scores and negatively impact students like 7th graders

## 4. **BRAINSTORMING:**

- West Mount Airy Neighbors and Go Mt. Airy have reached out to PTA
  - Andrea Calabretta is part of Mt. Airy CDC and reiterated their support
- Invite current political candidates to stand with us - be with us
- Make a short video that we can show our kids about why it's unsafe to be in schools with asbestos
- This lack of funding will eventually affect all district schools. Is it too much to suggest a district wide strike and rally at City Hall or 440 and Harrisburg on Monday?
- Develop an action plan that can be used for other schools (the counselor should do this, providing resources for parents to talk about asbestos with their kids)
- Attend next debate on May 9th: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/8th-district-city-council-debate-tickets-618548534317>
  - Questions for this debate can be sent to: [debate@gtownradio.com](mailto:debate@gtownradio.com)
- Support for families with kids who have IEPs

- Unified messaging to go out to press

TRANSCRIPT OF THE CHAT:

09:01:40 From Renee Twyman, MHA to Everyone:

Good morning!

09:01:42 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

Good morning, everyone!

09:01:47 From Christi to Everyone:

Good morning!

09:02:00 From Kaitlin Curtice to Everyone:

Good morning, thank you for hosting this

09:02:01 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

Also bumpy in our house!

09:02:03 From Christi to Everyone:

We couldn't get in either- lots of tears over here already

09:02:04 From Renee Twyman, MHA to Everyone:

Mental health day over here

09:02:17 From Alison Stumacher to Everyone:

Morning all! And same, zoom issues over here too.

09:02:31 From Joanna Wikander to Everyone:

We couldn't get into the morning announcements either.

09:03:06 From alysia Shaeffer to Everyone:

Morning!

09:03:15 From Amy Ignatow to Everyone:

Off-topic, but I'm taking the kids to see the Mario movie at the Flourtown Movie Tavern if anyone wants in on some rainy day afternoon activity where the kids are quiet for two hours

09:05:12 From Karen Scher (she/her) to Everyone:

<https://band.us/band/91005011/member>

09:05:47 From Janet Van Note to Everyone:

Hi, I'm Janet. Parent to 1st & 5th graders.

Zooming from my phone since my laptop is dead.

09:05:49 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

Blithe Riley she/her Colum, 1st grade

09:05:50 From Meg Ruthenburg to Everyone:

Meg - mom to Paz in 4th grade

09:05:54 From Sochi to Everyone:

Sochi Thomas - Kannon is in 2nd grade

09:05:56 From Christi to Everyone:

Christi - Griffin (3rd), Wyatt (1st)

09:05:56 From Kressent Pottenger to Everyone:

Kressent Pottenger - Eva 7th grader, Malcolm 3rd grader

09:05:57 From Katie Baillie to Everyone:

Hi, I'm Katie. My kids are Eamon and Henry in 4th grade

09:05:58 From Alison Stumacher to Everyone:

Ali stumacher—mom to Judah (4th) and Nathan (2nd)

09:05:58 From Andrea Calabretta to Everyone:

Hi, I'm Andrea Calabretta. Mom to Luca, 1st grade.

09:05:59 From Silvia Diaz (she/her) to Everyone:

Silvia (Mom to Jaime (2nd grade) and Adrian (4th grade))

09:06:00 From kmcdonnell to Everyone:

Karra McDonnell Gertie (Morris, 2nd) and Dorothy, 6th)

09:06:01 From Kate Yun to Everyone:

Kate Yun (she/her), Shin-yul's mom, 1st grade

09:06:02 From alysia sheaffer to Everyone:

Alysia Sheaffer, Annie-1st, Lucia-2nd

09:06:03 From Rachel Reilly to Everyone:

Rachel- mom to Griffin (4th) and Juniper (2nd)

09:06:05 From Kaitlin Curtice to Everyone:

Travis and Kaitlin, we have Eliot (5th) and Isaiah (3rd)

09:06:07 From Kim D Roth to Everyone:

Kim Roth, currently James in 5th and Cole in 3rd, their older sister is also a former Henry student

09:06:07 From Orien Smith-Warren to Everyone:

Orien Smith-Warren - David - 5th grade. I am also on the SAC

09:06:07 From bethany hartzell hughins to Everyone:

bethany - mama to phin (2nd) zeke (k) declan (k)

09:06:10 From Amy Ignatow to Everyone:

Amy Ignatow, mom of Anya (5th) and Ezra (2nd) and That Lady at the Book Fair

09:06:11 From Joanna Wikander to Everyone:

Joanna mother of Katherine 3rd grade

09:06:12 From Renee Twyman, MHA to Everyone:

Renee (zach (7), Sofia (4), Dominic (2))

09:06:12 From Maeve Curley to Everyone:

Maeve Curley - staff of Representative Rabb, thanks for hosting this!

09:06:13 From Reginald Streater, Esq. to Everyone:

Reginald (Reggie) Streater, Parent, Carlisle and Reagan

09:06:14 From Leah Murphy to Everyone:

Leah Murphy: Emory Murphy and Clark Murphy 1st Grade

09:06:20 From Kristina Garcia to Everyone:

Kristina Garcia—children Anna and miles

09:06:22 From Pat Coleman to Everyone:

Pat Coleman: Nieve (4th); Hannah (1st)

09:06:26 From kmcdonnell to Everyone:

I am teaching a class at 9:30 so I will might dip out early 😊thanks!

09:06:36 From Aqiylah Abdullah-Muhammad (She/They) to Everyone:

Carlisle (4th), Reagan (3rd).

09:07:06 From B3N to Everyone:

Ben Stanko: Theo 4th, Louie Kindergarten

09:17:49 From Christi to Everyone:

Inquirer Toxic City Schools Report: <https://www.inquirer.com/news/inq/toxic-city-philadelphia-inquirer-investigation-lead-asbestos-schools-20170618.html>

09:17:55 From Christi to Everyone:

<https://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Toxic-Schools-What-Parents-Need-to-Know.pdf>

09:19:33 From Catherine Coleman to Everyone:

I have relationships at Gratz

09:20:22 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

Our City Our Schools Coalition on FB: <http://ourcityourschools.com>

09:22:53 From Christi to Everyone:

May Day Rally in Harrisburg- 11a-2pm, lobby visits

09:23:09 From Kim D Roth to Everyone:

YES. we are done with virtual school

09:23:13 From Kim D Roth to Everyone:

DONE

09:23:33 From Kim D Roth to Everyone:

just proving that virtual school is not school.

09:23:40 From Kim D Roth to Everyone:

it's not an adequate substitute

09:23:46 From Kelly Cobb to Everyone:

We could do virtual school in Harrisburg

09:23:56 From Kelly Cobb to Everyone:

Sitting in the lobby

09:24:00 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

Virtual school in the capitol building!

09:24:28 From Christi to Everyone:

@Meg, I think the virtual school strike would be powerful if we got press coverage for it.

09:24:29 From Kelly Cobb to Everyone:

^^^^^^^^^^

09:24:31 From Catherine Coleman to Everyone:

I wonder if we could coordinate the strike with the other closed schools.

09:24:41 From Alison Stumacher to Everyone:

Wondering if there is any way to plug into the PILOTS organizing (Payments in lieu of taxes)—there is so much funding that is not reaching our schools because of tax exemptions for large non-profits (like Penn)

09:25:14 From kmcdonnell to Everyone:

Blithe, I love that open up those chrome books in the capitol building and show em how stupid it is!

09:27:43 From Christi to Everyone:

But there could be more asbestos in the building. This is a bandaid fix

09:27:54 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

+1 Christi

09:28:06 From kmcdonnell to Everyone:

I have a class to teach y'all! Thanks for having this.

09:28:35 From Renee Twyman, MHA to Everyone:



Is there any way we could know about the air quality and exposure from the damage being on the 1st floor? My daughters class is right across from Principal Ross' office.

09:29:16 From Amy Ignatow to Everyone:

Asbestos Academy

09:29:22 From Kate Yun (she/her) to Everyone:

How many other schools have plaster tests pending?

09:29:47 From Andrea Calabretta to Everyone:

@Renee I think we will hear more about that at the Monday 6pm environmental meeting

09:29:49 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

OCR was able to find a replacement space in 2 weeks

09:30:42 From Alison Wear (she/her) to Everyone:

OMC?

09:31:11 From Renee Twyman, MHA to Everyone:

Oh yeah, I'm going to that as well. Holding

09:33:15 From Janet M-V to Everyone:

I shared this online elsewhere: but I want to be vocal when I can:

I'm sure by next year it will be a lot more than 5 schools.

But with the tantrums my kids are having, and I am sure lots of families are struggling with no notice to find childcare.

If they cannot fix it in the time line they are saying, they need to set up an Alternate school site.

My older child has a 504 plan for ADHD-inattentive type and my younger child has an IEP for gifted and his sensory issues. I had them both in out of school OT for MONTHS this year. I see all that progress unraveling. I want her to finish 5th grade strong!

09:33:26 From lynda O'Leary to Everyone:

A mental health action plan- resources for parents and an action plan for schools

09:36:07 From Joanna Wikander to Everyone:

next city council debate is 5/9 at 7pm <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/8th-district-city-council-debate-tickets-618548534317>

09:36:57 From Joanna Wikander to Everyone:

questions for the next debate can be sent to [debate@gtownradio.com](mailto:debate@gtownradio.com)

09:37:06 From Leah Murphy to Everyone:

@Reginald can you confirm that the timeline for remediation will be the two weeks as originally communicated?

09:37:25 From Reginald Streater, Esq. to Everyone:

Leah,

09:38:20 From Catherine Coleman to Everyone:

This lack of funding will eventually affect all district schools, is it too much to suggest a district wide strike and rally at City Hall or 440 and Harrisburg on Monday?

09:39:06 From Karen Scher (she/her) to Everyone:

I think that would be great, Catherine. Maybe Harrisburg on Monday and 440 another time?

09:39:25 From Andrea Calabretta to Everyone:

I think that's a powerful visual for media - kids sitting on their laptops doing virtual school at the state capitol

09:40:20 From Reginald Streater, Esq. to Everyone:

Leah, because it is a fluid situation, I can say is that the repairs and process is looking good. The District is working at a feverish pace to ensure that the remediation will be within the two weeks as was originally communicated. At this point, it does not appear to be a Frankford level event.

09:40:27 From Meg Ruthenburg to Everyone:

I powerfully want to advocate, but Monday is too short of a timeline for families who are already struggling to juggle. I don't like the idea of creating a privilege divide among families because some people have flexible jobs. Could we plan it farther out so people can plan.

09:40:54 From Alison Stumacher to Everyone:

Some folks mentioned that there are parent groups at the other affected schools—are there ideas for how we connect with them?

09:41:30 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

Appreciate you Reggie!

09:41:38 From Andrea Calabretta to Everyone:

Thank you, Reggie,

09:41:39 From Kressent Pottenger to Everyone:

Thank you Reggie!

09:41:46 From lynda o'leary to Everyone:

Thanks Reggie!

09:42:01 From Amy Ignatow to Everyone:

Thanks, Reggie!

09:42:06 From Mariana Mendez to Everyone:

Thanks Reggie!

09:42:10 From Kate Yun (CHOP) to Everyone:

apologies my connection dropped and I missed the past minute or so

09:42:35 From Andrea Calabretta to Everyone:

Agree Monday is too soon

09:43:07 From Catherine Coleman to Everyone:

Is there a reason Kendra Brooks picked Monday? Could she delay?

09:44:03 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

And just to reiterate, its multi issue

09:44:22 From Christi to Everyone:

Christi: 301-204-7583, christinjclark@gmail.com

09:46:30 From Meg Ruthenburg to Everyone:

Action at 440 should include a student walkout Area high schools have done a great job of using these actions, most recently the trans walkout. I know there had already been mention of reaching out to Philly Student Union

09:46:42 From Renee Twyman, MHA to Everyone:

I have to jump off to prepare for volunteer work at pennypacker. I will be on the call on Monday. Looking forward to the notes and action items from this call! Thank so much for organizing!!

09:46:51 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

Maybe people can put there opinions about that question in the chat

09:46:56 From Christi to Everyone:

Thanks for asking, Leah! I had the same question and am interested in longer term organizing in addition to the short term work

09:47:07 From Kate Yun (CHOP) to Everyone:

I would like us to remain engaged even if/when Henry is "fixed". The fact that SDP missed this damaged asbestos despite Q3 year AHERA testing/inspection completely undermines my trust in the technical proficiency (or integrity?) of that environmental safety process. And I work with newcomer families in South Philly who don't speak English, and I have the bad feeling that those schools are going to be affected

09:47:10 From Mariana Mendez to Everyone:

Here's the Band link again

Hey, join our 'School Asbestos Action Group' group on BAND - The app for groups and communities!

<https://band.us/n/a5a083u1J0Tbp>

09:47:20 From alysia sheaffer to Everyone:

Christi- you mentioned the teacher petition... is that something we should /could start circulating... wasn't sure if you've already identified teachers to send that out to, or how to get word out to them? Was May 8th the date that's being delivered, could we plan for 440 action on that date?

09:47:41 From Amy Raphael to Everyone:

I came in late. Did Reggie say that they will likely be back in 2 weeks? I would also like to know what the school district has to say about people who do not have flexible work schedules to work from home and do not have alternate child care. I also would like to know what the school district has to say about children who have IEP's; virtual speech, OT, and special instruction is not the same as in person services.

09:47:42 From Janet M-V to Everyone:

i really think my 5th grader will suffer greatly if she has to zoom the entirety of the 4th marking period

09:48:26 From Catherine Coleman to Everyone:

@Leah, yes! I agree. Maybe a permanent post on our PTA that works on organizing with other schools.

09:49:56 From Jessica Schaefer to Everyone:

Some info is coming through email from the school district and on remind, while other things are just on remind. Can we not email?

09:50:52 From Alison Wear (she/her) to Everyone:

An idea for making sure families are connecting to info: last round of zoom school, I checked w teachers to see if there were any students/families they hadn't been able to connect with. We could each try to help in that way

09:51:10 From Janet M-V to Everyone:

thanks leah for mentioning the risk

09:51:25 From Alison Wear (she/her) to Everyone:

I believe District email has the benefit of translation available for folks who need it

09:53:41 From Janet M-V to Everyone:

Il do not have the space to welcome other children into our home to zoom school, but I wish I could help watch 2-3 additional kids in a public space (Library, Rec Center, Park) if I could access the internet for 4-5 kids (my children and their classmates) at 8:45 in the morning

09:53:41 From Orien Smith-Warren to Everyone:

Sharing Janet Van Note's contact information: [janetmartin83@gmail.com](mailto:janetmartin83@gmail.com).

09:53:43 From Christi to Everyone:

@alysia - the petition is being finalized Monday night so if you know any teachers who might want to work on/ circulate the petition let me know and I can connect them to the call infno

09:54:01 From Janet M-V to Everyone:

Blue Bell park could be a good place to meet closer to henry

09:54:05 From Amy Raphael to Everyone:

Parents of children with IEP's

09:54:52 From Janet M-V to Everyone:

such a good point about pssas and 7th graders

09:54:56 From Alison Wear (she/her) to Everyone:

+1 to Amy's comment

09:55:21 From Alison Wear (she/her) to Everyone:

Do we have a team connecting w other schools regarding this issue?

09:55:48 From Karen Scher (she/her) to Everyone:

I'll add that, Alison -- Christi has done some initial outreach

09:56:08 From Alison Wear (she/her) to Everyone:

Great

09:56:53 From Kressent Pottenger to Everyone:

I think we need some added activities oriented towards getting the upper school together- my 7th grader has said much of her class is not even in attendance.

09:57:53 From Janet M-V to Everyone:

Kressent - I agree. And as a rising 6th grade family who is staying through 8th - I would happy to help plan and attend with my 11 yo to upper school activities

09:58:26 From lynda o'leary to Everyone:

Thanks so much for all you are doing, Karen!

09:58:28 From Janet M-V to Everyone:

Janet Martin-Van Note

267-751-9644

janetmartin83@gmail.com

09:59:27 From Blithe Riley she/her to Everyone:

Love that!

09:59:59 From Karen Scher (she/her) to Everyone:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pewwUw5WfU24cstc14wIGviZqGOkx5v0CgMCwcl8c\\_g/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pewwUw5WfU24cstc14wIGviZqGOkx5v0CgMCwcl8c_g/edit#gid=0)

10:00:08 From Rachel Reilly to Karen Scher (she/her)(Direct Message):

You did an amazing job today. thank you so much for organizing. Gotta go.

10:00:23 From Andrea Calabretta to Everyone:

That works!

10:00:29 From Christi to Everyone:

Thanks for organizing the call, Karen

10:00:37 From Alison Wear (she/her) to Karen Scher (she/her)(Direct Message):

Does everyone have edit power on that doc?

10:01:10 From Kressent Pottenger to Everyone:

Thank you so much Karen!

10:01:13 From Silvia Diaz (she/her) to Everyone:

Thank you, Karen!

10:01:19 From Mariana Mendez to Everyone:

Thank you