

Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School
Date: Thursday, June 1, 2023 at 9:54:26 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Denise Swarthout
To: Bryan Bridge
Attachments: image001.png, image002.jpg, image003.png

Hi Bryan – here’s the information I have to share at the moment, we hope to have more info to share soon:

Out of an abundance of caution, we are temporarily closing the two Dennis Lab School campuses following an analysis from a structural engineer. We are looking to get a second opinion this week, but for the moment we are asking all staff at the two Dennis Lab School campuses to work from home or at an alternate location through Monday, June 5.

Denise Swarthout

Chief Communications Officer
Decatur Public Schools
217.855.3639



From: Bryan Bridge <bpbbridge@sbgvtv.com>
Date: Thursday, June 1, 2023 at 9:38 AM
To: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Subject: Dennis Lab School

Good morning Denise,
I am just seeking a bit more information on the Dennis Lab School closing and confirming details I’ve seen in other articles.
Why did the district temporarily close Dennis Lab School?
Any timeline or date that you plan on reopening it?
I’ve seen something about an infrastructure problem, can you confirm exactly what it was?
If somebody came out to check it, when was that?

Thank you!

Bryan Bridge
Decatur Journalist
Email: bpbbridge@sbgvtv.com
Cell: (217)299-4999



Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update
Date: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 at 8:20:35 PM Central Daylight Time
From: Denise Swarhout
To: Scarlett Ohara
Attachments: image001.png, image002.png, image003.png, image004.png, image005.png, image006.png, Outlook-fmmls0ez.png, Outlook-mwywps0l.png

It is, and we will communicate with affected families as necessary, pending the second engineering opinion.

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From: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 8:18:34 PM
To: Denise Swarhout <DSwarhout@dps61.org>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

Is any tutoring scheduled to be held there?

Scarlett O'Hara | Multimedia Journalist
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From: Denise Swarhout <DSwarhout@dps61.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 8:17 PM
To: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

Correct.

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From: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 7:41:55 PM
To: Denise Swarhout <DSwarhout@dps61.org>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

One more question - yesterday was the last day of school, right? So, students won't be affected by the closure at this point?

Scarlett O'Hara | Multimedia Journalist
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From: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 3:48 PM
To: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

No, I don't have those available.

Denise Swarthout

Chief Communications Officer
Decatur Public Schools
217.855.3639



From: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Date: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 at 3:47 PM
To: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

Are you able to share the findings from his analysis?

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From: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 3:44:59 PM
To: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

We requested the analysis from a structural engineer this spring, but yesterday was the first availability on his schedule to come out and do the analysis.

Denise Swarthout

Chief Communications Officer
Decatur Public Schools
217.855.3639



From: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Date: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 at 3:44 PM
To: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

When was the first opinion sought?

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From: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 3:35:27 PM
To: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

We are looking to get a second opinion this week, but for the moment we are asking all staff at the two Dennis Lab School campuses to work from home or at an alternate location through Monday.

Denise Swarthout
Chief Communications Officer
Decatur Public Schools
217.855.3639



From: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Date: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 at 3:22 PM
To: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

Thanks for getting back to me. Are you able to clarify what the structural concerns are and how long the campuses will be closed for?

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From: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 3:20:49 PM
To: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

Hi Scarlett! We're not available for on-camera interviews at this time, the statement is all the information we have to share.

Denise Swarthout

Chief Communications Officer
Decatur Public Schools
217.855.3639



From: Scarlett Ohara <SOhara@wcia.com>
Date: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 at 2:33 PM
To: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Subject: Re: Dennis Lab School Update

Hi,

We'll be in town covering this today. Would you and/or the principal of Dennis Lab School be available for a quick interview? I can also be reached at 773-603-9339 (cell). Thank you!

Best,
Scarlett O'Hara

Scarlett O'Hara | Multimedia Journalist

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From: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 2:01 PM
Subject: Dennis Lab School Update

Out of an abundance of caution, Decatur Public Schools is temporarily closing the two Dennis Lab School campuses while we further assess structural concerns with the two buildings. We continue to do our due diligence, as we take proactive steps to ensure the safety of students and staff at all DPS schools.

Denise Swarthout

Chief Communications Officer
Decatur Public Schools
217.855.3639



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