



Was the District Negligent? Sept 12 BOE Speech

Opinion by [Reed Sutman](#) on Sep 12, 2023. Updated [Sep 12, 2023](#).

Tags:

This is a speech for the Decatur Public Schools Board of Education, for September 12th, 2023, to be delivered by Reed Sutman

I'm Reed Sutman, speaking on behalf of DecaturVote.com.

The 2013 Health/Life Safety Survey for Dennis Lab's Mosaic Campus revealed several cases of water damage and masonry damage. Maintenance Requests, received through FOIA, show that some of this 2013 water damage and 2013 masonry damage was fixed 6 years later, in 2019.

Note that I did not see a clear indication these damages were related to the unsafe stairs spoken about by a parent in August last year, and revealed by structural engineers 9 months later in May of this year.

Either way, it is concerning to see records that show water damage and masonry damage was not repaired for 6 years.

What's more concerning to me, is the District's lack of meaningful response on this, and all issues related to the maintenance history of these buildings.

I emailed Kent Metzger, who understandably said that he doesn't have more information to give, since these issues predate his 2021 employment.

So I emailed Denise Swarthout, and she didn't respond. A week later, I emailed her again and CC'd the entire board and Superintendent. That time, I got a prompt reply that quote "the District has no further information to provide."

I have received this kind of response, or no reply, many times. I have previously advocated that you investigate, provide transparency, and implement policy to aid in future transparency.

I want to know: Are the Dennis Lab Buildings structurally unsafe due to District negligence?

That's all I want to know.

Was the District negligent? Was the District negligent?

Bill Clevenger has suggested looking to the future, not the past. Alana Banks has dismissed my concerns. Administration has stonewalled and misled me. Administration has made misleading statements to the public, which I've reported on in detail.

The Board, as a whole, has failed to ask important questions, has not initiated an investigation, and has not shown any interest in finding out if there was negligence.

Was the District negligent? And why don't you want the public to know?

Disclaimer: I served on the Decatur Pride Board with Alana Banks in late 2018, early 2019.

This is an article about the topic [Dennis Schools Structural Issues](#) .