

School Asbestos Removal Nearly Done - Omaha World-Herald (NE) - July 17, 1986

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Major asbestos removal at Omaha School District buildings will be completed for the year by the end of July, district construction manager Mark Warneke said.

In two weeks, the targeted asbestos will be gone from Benson and North High Schools, George W. Norris Junior High School and **Howard Kennedy Elementary School**, he said.

After the asbestos, used as an insulation, is removed the schools will be reinsulated, he said. About 15 schools have been targeted in the last three summers, he said.

Although about three - fourths of the more than 80 Omaha public schools contain asbestos, he said, "a lot of it is in good shape" and won't need to be removed, at least for now.

The school district probably will target two or three schools each summer for many years, Warneke said, and remove smaller spots of asbestos as they become problems.

Asbestos, a natural mineral, was used frequently from the 1880s until 1973, when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency declared it a health hazard. The EPA says that inhaling microscopic asbestos fibers can cause lung diseases and cancer.

On July 7, the Omaha school board approved an asbestos - removal budget of \$670,000 for 1986 - 87, about the same amount budgeted the previous year.

Bob Timmerman, the City of Omaha's chief air pollution control inspector, said asbestos removal "keeps us hopping" in all area schools, including parochial ones and those in the Millard and Bellevue districts.

About 25 or 30 more schools are slated for asbestos removal in the next few years, he said.

The insulation has been taken out of nearly 50 area schools in the last two years, Timmerman said.

The EPA finances about threefourths of the city's asbestos removal, he said. School buildings are the top priority because so many people use them, he said. Now the city is looking at about 200 other public buildings to see if removing asbestos from them is wise.

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