THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
South Orange & Maplewood

Mr. Jason Bing
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Dear SOMSD Families,

We are writing to provide transparent, accurate information regarding recent environmental soil testing conducted at Ritzer Athletic Field. During assessments related to evaluating field and construction planning, soil testing identified the presence of arsenic. We want to share what these numbers mean directly from the environmental and health experts evaluating the site: **the field is safe for athletic and physical education usage at this time.**

Understanding the Numbers & Student Safety

Environmental health specialists developed site-specific health standards tailored specifically to high school athletes using this field (calculated on a model of an athlete playing 90 days per year for all four years of high school):

- Safe Recreational Standard: 34 mg/kg — Health experts determined that surface soil arsenic levels up to 34 mg/kg present no elevated health risk to students participating in sports or recreational activities.
- Current Field Levels: The average surface level across the field is 22.6 mg/kg, with a 95% Upper Confidence Limit (UCL) of 27.4 mg/kg. Because both the average and the upper statistical estimate remain below the 34 mg/kg threshold, the field poses no health risk to our student athletes.

Why Precautions Are Being Taken

You may wonder why state regulatory steps are necessary if the levels are within safe recreational limits. The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) sets a baseline regulatory reporting threshold of 19 mg/kg, which is based on natural background soil composition rather than an immediate risk of harm.

Because current surface levels sit between the state baseline limit (19 mg/kg) and the site-specific safety threshold (34 mg/kg), formal soil management protocols and mitigation precautions are being analyzed before and during any earthwork or construction, or certain maintenance such as deep core aeration.

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Next Steps

We are actively coordinating with the DEP and environmental engineering consultants to finalize the appropriate site management plan and ensure full regulatory compliance.

Our highest priority is the health and well-being of our students, staff, and community. We will continue to keep you updated as our discussions with the DEP progress. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to the district office.

Sincerely,



Jason Bing