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[< Back to front page](#)

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JAMAICA PLAIN

Paint removal to delay opening of JP school by two days

Posted by Matt Rocheleau September 1, 2011 05:14 PM

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By **Matt Rocheleau**, Town Correspondent

A Jamaica Plain elementary school will open two days late in order to complete work to remove trace amounts of a toxin in the building's old, flaking paint, the School Department says.

The James W. Hennigan Elementary School and the West Zone Early Learning Center, which combined enroll roughly 700 students, will start their academic year Sept. 12., two school days after other Boston students start classes, officials told families today.

Make-up dates for those two schools housed in the same Heath Street building have not been finalized, but are "likely to be added to the end of the year," a spokesman said.

An unforeseen removal and repainting project at the Hennigan building was announced by Boston Public School officials in the first letter to families two weeks ago. That work is "nearly finished," officials said today.

In the [initial letter to families](#), sent four days after the school system received results back from tests, school officials said the amount of PCB, or polychlorinated biphenyl, found in the building's paint was "nominal and is not even significant enough to meet federal reporting thresholds."

"Our environmental assessment and remediation plan goes above and beyond what other cities and school districts around the nation are doing, and far beyond what federal regulations require," Superintendent Carol R. Johnson wrote in that letter.

City school officials had planned to announce further details about a schedule for the project last week. But, this past weekend's [tropical storm delayed word](#) on whether the K-5 school would open on time, be delayed, or have classes temporarily moved to the recently-closed Louis Agassiz Elementary School on Child Street, around one-and-a-half miles away from Hennigan elementary.

Though classes won't be held there, the Agassiz Community Center will be available Sept. 8 and the following day starting at 9 a.m., city school officials said.

"Please note this is limited service, and is only available to students who would have normally started school on Thursday – first grade and higher – and not for students in kindergarten or younger, who don't begin until Monday the 12th anyway," officials said.

"We know this short delay will be inconvenient for many families," officials

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added in Thursday's message. "Thank you for your patience and understanding as we complete this important repair project ... We look forward to seeing you on September 12 at the Hennigan."

School officials said questions can be directed to the city's back-to-school hotline 617-635-9046. For more, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org.

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[◀ Previous entry](#)

[Next entry ▶](#)