

Preble fire cleanup extensive





Patti Zarling, Press-Gazette Media 5:54 p.m. CDT August 14, 2014



(Photo: Evan Siegle/Press-Gazette Media)

Crews are working around the clock to clean at Green Bay's Preble High School after a fire in the gym last week, and officials still are not sure when students will be able to come to class.

Workers are wiping down or cleaning everything from library books to trophies to lockers to gym and band equipment as well as those small areas between lockers and walls.

An early morning fire on Aug. 8 in the gym was caused by spontaneous combustion due to chemical-laden rags that were improperly disposed, causing smoke damage throughout the building.

Workers in hardhats were cleaning chairs in the auditorium one by one, scrubbing walls and rolling up banners

during a Thursday media tour.

RELATED: [City extends helping hand to Preble \(/story/news/local/2014/08/13/preble-students-family-asked-visit-school/14011221/\)](/story/news/local/2014/08/13/preble-students-family-asked-visit-school/14011221/)

Green Bay School District officials cannot determine when students can attend school until results from a number of tests, including air quality, show the extent of the damage, according to J. Murphy of Paul Davis National, which is doing the work.

Students had been scheduled to return to school on Sept. 2, but damage to the gym — as well as smoke damage through much of the school — has delayed that until cleanup is done.

The school was divided into zones depending on damage. Zone A, which had the least damage, includes the library and some language arts and science classrooms. Zone B has some damage and includes the school commons, auditorium and some classrooms. Zone C is the the most damaged and includes the gym.

Items are sealed and marked with blue tape once they are cleaned, Murphy said.

Teachers are allowed a two-hour period to visit their classroom to clean out items, he said. They can throw out anything unusable and cleanup workers help determine whether it is cost-effective to clean other items.

RELATED: [Preble fire delays start of school \(/story/news/local/2014/08/11/preble-high-school-update-planned-today/13898447/\)](/story/news/local/2014/08/11/preble-high-school-update-planned-today/13898447/)

Everything will be replaced in the gym where the fire occurred, including flooring and duct work. The gym will not be ready when students return to class, Murphy said. A smaller gym, which had floors redone before the fire, will be open, he said.

Murphy noted that soot and smoke damage that can be seen are the easiest to clean. The unknowns make it difficult to determine the extent of damage and when students can come to school, Murphy said.

Tests, including those for air quality, help determine whether ceiling tiles can be cleaned or must be replaced, for example, Murphy said.

He meets with school officials daily to discuss progress or address issues, Murphy said.

Clerical staff and operations have been moved to the district offices at 200 South Broadway. A number of activities have been moved to other buildings or postponed.

RELATED: [Preble gym fire causes extensive damage \(/story/news/local/2014/08/08/gym-fire-closes-preble-high-day/13764133/\)](/story/news/local/2014/08/08/gym-fire-closes-preble-high-day/13764133/)

Parents or student families are asked not to visit the school during cleanup, he said. Many have offered to volunteer, but there isn't anything they can do, Murphy said.

Some local businesses and organizations, including Cousins Subs and the Green Bay Bullfrogs baseball team, have collected donations for the school. District officials said insurance should cover damage costs. A special account has created to pool donations and officials will decide what to do with funds.