

December 7, 2025

To: Bend-La Pine School District Leadership
Cc: School Board Members and Superintendent

We, the undersigned educators of Miller Elementary School, are writing to formally express our serious concerns regarding the safety of our school building following the chemical fire that occurred on November 30 at 9 PM. At this time, we do not feel safe entering the school, nor do we believe it is appropriate for staff or students to occupy the building until clear, comprehensive, and verified documentation is provided confirming that it is safe.

We were expected to return to school on Wednesday, December 2 and there has been a strong odor in the building. As a result, many teachers and staff have reported troubling health symptoms while inside the building, including headaches, sore throats, runny noses, respiratory issues, and watery or irritated eyes. Furthermore, numerous teachers have called in sick or left school early due to the sudden on-set of symptoms mentioned above. These symptoms raise serious questions about ongoing exposure to contaminants that may still be present in the environment.

We are particularly concerned about both the short-term and long-term health implications of exposure to chemicals released during a chemical fire. Such fires can produce uniquely toxic smoke and residue, coating surfaces with harmful compounds such as benzene, PCBs, and other substances known to cause central nervous system damage, reproductive harm, and increased cancer risk. These dangers warrant extreme caution and complete transparency.

Unfortunately, we do not feel that the Bend-La Pine School District has been transparent with staff or parents regarding the protocols used to assess the building, the scope and findings of environmental testing, or the criteria being used to determine when the building is safe for re-entry. The only thing we have been told is that an AQI test was administered and we are "cleared" to return to school. However, an AQI test does not directly measure most of the dangerous gasses and contaminants produced by a lithium-ion battery fire. It only reflects common outdoor pollutants and is not designed for the complex, toxic chemical mix released by battery fires.

Therefore, we are petitioning the district to:

1. **Immediately close Miller Elementary School** to all staff and students until independent, comprehensive environmental testing has been completed.
2. **Provide full documentation** of all testing results, cleanup procedures, safety protocols, and clearance standards used to determine building safety.
3. **Ensure that all testing is conducted by qualified, independent environmental firm or industrial health hygienist**, with results shared promptly and transparently.

4. **Communicate clearly and regularly** with staff, parents, and the community regarding the status of the school building, risks identified, and steps taken to mitigate those risks.

Our commitment is first and foremost to the safety and well-being of our students, our colleagues, and ourselves. We cannot in good conscience return to a building that may still pose a health risk without verified, transparent evidence that it is safe.

We respectfully request immediate action on this matter.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Educators of Miller Elementary School

Name: Kenan Macomber Signature: Kenan Macomber

Name: Cody McCabe Signature: Cody R. McCabe

Name: Erin Young Signature: Erin Young

Name: Marc Saccoman Signature: Marc Saccoman

Name: Melissa Hoover Signature: Melissa Hoover

Name: Mollie Duncan Signature: Mollie Duncan

Name: Andrea Groves Signature: Andrea Groves

Name: Meghan Kirraud Signature: Meghan Kirraud

Name: Michael Wanger Signature: Michael Wanger

Name: Toni Osorio Signature: Toni Osorio

Name: Annette Bowler Signature: Annette Bowler

Name: Jodi Templeton Signature: Jodi Templeton

Name: LAURA HOME KAISER Signature: Laura Home Kaiser

Name: Stephanie Rogers Signature: Stephanie Rogers

Name: Susan Rife Signature: Susan Rife

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____