August, 2008

**To:** District Superintendents

 Superintendents of Schools

**From:** Carl T. Thurnau, P.E., Director 

**Subject:** **SYNTHETIC TURF ISSUES**

As many of you are aware, potential health concerns associated with Synthetic Turf fields have arisen. At this time, it has been shown that fields manufactured with nylon or nylon blend fibers may contain lead which can be released as the fibers become worn and broken over time.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends testing nylon fiber fields that appear worn or weathered. Based on currently available data, they do not recommend testing fields that are manufactured with polyethylene only fibers.

 The New York State Health Department (DOH) has also provided guidance on testing for those districts that choose to do so. There is no requirement to test at this time.

 The CDC attachment provides valuable information on controlling use of and access to the field if testing indicates the presence of lead greater than 400 ppm. It also discusses proper hygieneand washing during and after use of fields that test positive for lead.

 In addition, lead containing fields may need to be disposed of in accordance with DEC Hazardous Waste requirements if the contamination meets the requirements of 6NYCCR 371.3(e) for either lead or chromium.

 **APPROVAL OF NEW FIELDS AND BUILDING AID:**

 Based on the latest information, the department advises each district that is considering artificial turf to carefully weigh all factors including potential health impacts to students and the community, initial, continuing and replacement costs, life cycle, turf material, and potential disposal costs when determining to install a synthetic field.

 In order to avoid spending significant state capital resources on systems that may pose a potential health impact to users and may additionally pose a significant disposal cost if determined to be hazardous materials; the following requirements must be met:

 **Effective immediately:** In order to obtain SED approval for building aid on a synthetic field, the following will be required:

 1. Certification from the manufacturer that lead or lead chromate is not used in the manufacture of the Turf.

 2. A statement from the manufacturer that the life cycle of the Turf will meet or exceed 15 years. State Aid will not be available for the replacement of Artificial Turf **less than** 15 years old.

 This will help ensure that the public is protected while at the same time ensuring that the life cycle of the installed product is equal to the length of time necessary to pay off project financing.

 For additional information please review the attached CDC and DOH Health Advisory and Testing guidance. The CDC advisory also contains web links for additional information.

 If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of Facilities Planning at:

 (518) 474-3906.