

# Cleanliness Is Next To...

posted – May 8, 2017

You may have heard of the recent reports of schools located on the Southside as having issues with bed bugs. In fact, a new report of another school this morning. From what I have seen and heard, Hampton's issues may be different and on a larger scale.

I have been in the schools and I have heard the stories as too the lack of cleanliness. A current school board member – Ann Stephens-Cherry – spoke to the issue while addressing the board as a private citizen less than six months after janitorial service was outsourced and the contractor took over. Another board member, who was recently re-elected, often hyped the wonderful shape of our schools during her campaigning...gosh darn it, they changed the light fixtures in these buildings. Health inspections, to the contrary, have shed an additional and a completely different light on the condition of our schools.

<https://vib.by/v/7yBCyVMF7>

I noticed a decline in the cleanliness of the schools after the janitorial service was outsourced. As the janitorial staff who were being outsourced warned, this would probably be the outcome. Apparently, they went above and beyond for an unappreciative Hampton City Schools before being sent on their way. This led me to my first request, in May 2015, for the elusive **Report Card** that governs the effectiveness of the contractor's work. It came with a hefty price tag - \$233.34. It would take someone – the FOIA officer — who was making \$61.53 an hour, three hours to redact 200 pages...of what I am not sure. Of the 200 pages, 195 would cost 25¢ per page with the first five being free. My initial request for the reports was broad. I wanted all the inspections from the start of the contract on July 1, 2014 to May 15, 2015. Nearly a year's worth of inspections. However, the price was too steep for me.

After a year of reading health inspections, hearing complaints and seeing conditions for myself, I thought of a different approach to see how the inspections were going. I have to admit that I was leery of the honesty I would find in the reports given Stephens-Cherry statement to the board about intimidated administrators. It is citizen's money that would be wasted and children jeopardized if the contractor fails to perform satisfactory and I would like to think that the principals or/and administrative staff were protecting our interests.

On April 27, 2017, I asked for copies of the most recent report for each school. Shouldn't amount to an excessive amount – I was thinking – 31 reports maybe 31 pages. I was wrong. It seems that I was way wrong. The comment sections must be so great that schools are averaging 5 or 6 additional pages for comments. So now, rather than \$233.34 for nearly a year worth of reports, it would now be \$239.25 for just the most recent **Report Card** for each school. Dang! Just to redact the reports would come to \$190.50. What on Earth is on these reports that would need to be redacted...other than failing grades?

I asked for a sample of a blank **Report Card**. Let me reassure you...it was free. Below is a copy of the report Hampton City Schools provided. As you can see, nothing would require redacting. I have to wonder, if silence and lack of transparency has led to the contract's automatic renewal as of June 30, 2017.

**Hampton City Schools**

**GCA Custodial Survey / Report Card**

MONTH: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please grade the following services:**  
A (100-93) B (92 -85) C (84-77) D (76-70) F (70- below)

**GRADE**

Hallways Clean	_____
Restrooms:	
Clean	_____
Stocked	_____
Classrooms:	
Floors	_____
Trash	_____
Dusting	_____
Media Center:	
Carpet Vacuumed	_____
Dusted	_____
Cafeteria Clean	_____
Gym Area Clean	_____
Manager Responsive to Issues and Readily Available	_____

Comments or Special Needs for Interior (Example: upcoming events, PTA, Open House)

Signature of Principal or School Representative: