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**CONCERN**  
**SOUTHSIDE**

**Testing to include field near school**

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Ed Austin has known for years that there was something funny about the field behind Oakdale Avenue on Elmira's Southside, where he lives.

There are large brown patches in the former recreation area that served industrial plants that once operated there. Even weeds won't grow there. But for years, many neighborhood children have played in the field, which is located between their homes and the Notre Dame High School football field.

Austin's son, Scott, was one of those children. He died in 1997 at age 31 of glioblastoma, a type of brain cancer. Scott Austin attended Southside High School, which is now being investigated for a reportedly high cancer rate among its students.


Southside High sits on a former industrial site that was once home to factories operated by companies such as Remington Rand and American LaFrance. The American LaFrance factory next to the school recently underwent a hazardous waste cleanup.

Ed Austin complained last week at a public hearing about the scheduled-looking spots in the field south of the plant. Now, New York state Health Department and state Department of Environmental Conservation officials plan to test the factory's recreation area. The space was once used for employee baseball games and picnics.

Soil tests for metals, volatile and semi-volatile compounds, and polychlorinated biphenyls (also known as PCBs, a toxic insulator often used as an insulator in electrical equipment) will be conducted this week at the same time as tests at the high school, said Mary Jane Peachey, regional hazardous waste remediation engineer with the conservation department. Test results probably will not be available for 30 days.

The groundwater on the property was tested for contamination about three times since the early 1990s, Peachey said, but no contaminants were found.

Peachey said the state Department of Health will



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