

Southside safe, extra soil tests affirm

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State health and environmental officials said Monday night that they've completed a tedious and expensive slew of tests and the results appear the same: Southside High School, including its athletic fields, is safe.

Two officials told the Southside Advisory Committee and a couple of dozen residents that the test results of soil samples collected at the school in September were very similar to the findings presented by the state during a public meeting Aug. 23.

But perhaps more importantly, the state officials — Mary Jane Peachey, a regional hazardous waste remediation engineer with the Department of Environmental Conservation, and Andy Carlson, the director of the health department's Bureau of Environmental Exposure and Investigation — answered questions from committee members and residents about how the state reached its conclusions.

The representatives explained to one man how the rise and fall of the water table would not significantly affect their results. They told a mother of a cancer patient that students who planted trees at the school a few years ago did not face any significant health risk. They told another mother that her daughter would be safe playing softball on the school's fields.

The officials also explained the testing process:

■ Tubes were punched into

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