

# Team of independent experts will analyze soil, air data

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Monday night, an 11-member committee started formulating a dream team to assist in uncovering the truths hidden in the soil of Southside High School.

The Southside Advisory Committee voted to let a federally-funded technical assistance group, the Northeast

Hazardous Substance Research Center at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark, N.J., help interpret environmental data.

The committee, made up of a physician, scientists, environmental attorneys, parents of recent graduates with cancer, and health and safety officials, will work with the research center to pick the people who analyze the data.

Since May, the state Department of Environmental Con-



servation has collected hundreds of soil samples at Southside High School that indicate the soil has been contaminated by more than a 100 years of heavy industrial activity. However, the state Department of Health said during an Aug. 23 meeting that the level of conta-

mination at the school does not pose a health risk to students or staff and that cancer rates among students, except for testicular cancer, were normal or better.

The committee formed to get a second opinion for community members who doubted the state's findings. They also convinced the state to extend the deadline to Dec. 1 regarding comments and questions about the Health Department's findings that the school was

safe.

William Librizzi, manager of the Northeast Hazardous Substance Research Center, presented information to the committee Monday night about the Technical Outreach Services for Communities. The program, which is funded by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, provides citizen review groups with independent expert opinions about work done by state agencies. The experts come from a

consortium of universities in the Northeast.

"We, the committee and the community, we want the straight story," said Craig Slater, co-chair of the committee and the environmental attorney hired by the city of Elmira. "These, truly, are independent folks, with high quality talent and come to us at no cost. It doesn't get any better."

The research center will begin putting together a team of

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Tue, Apr 16, 2019