



## Colbert County Schools

Post Office Box 538

425 Highway 72 West

Tuscumbia, Alabama 35674

Phone 256-386-8565 • Fax 256-381-9375

[www.colbert.k12.al.us](http://www.colbert.k12.al.us)

*Superintendent*

**Mr. Chris Hand**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Thomas Barnes  
Thomas Burgess  
Sandra James  
Ricky Saint  
Jacqueline Witt  
David Yarber**

**CHIEF SCHOOL  
FINANCIAL OFFICER**

**Terry Wilhite**

November 4, 2022

To the Stakeholders of Cherokee High School:

We have had several engineers, contractors, our school architect, a geotechnical firm, a roofing contractor, and a hydrologist involved over the last several months in an attempt to determine where the groundwater source is coming from and to what extent damage has been caused. We know for sure that the gym floor has been the most obvious location exhibiting damage, but other areas have been recently identified. Following a facility assessment by Volkert Engineering in August, they strongly suggested that the auditorium area be thoroughly evaluated by a structural engineer. That evaluation was recently completed and the report was returned this week. Since then, we have taken the recommendations of the structural engineer to close off the auditorium and related areas due to concerns of structural issues under the foundation. They also identified major electrical and water issues in the basement of the auditorium.

Based on the recommendations of the structural engineer, we have closed off the auditorium in order to avoid any potential safety concerns with the day-to-day activities of our students and faculty. This will cause a slight change in the traffic flow within the buildings, but should not cause any other interference with the learning environment within the school. We have other inspectors and construction professionals scheduled to come next week to finish gathering the necessary information we need to decide on how to develop a solution.

Our students and staff are in no immediate danger. It is regretful that we have to close off this area temporarily, but we do not want anyone in this area until a more thorough examination is being made.

Please know that the safety and well-being of our students and staff is my first priority. I have created a video that will be sent out through the system-wide communication platform. This video provides a timeline of events and the steps we have taken so far. As I am provided with more information and guidance on this situation, I will share it with you.

Thank you for your patience as we work together to solve this issue.

Sincerely,

**Chris Hand  
Superintendent**