

Parents file \$32 million sick-building suit against District 200

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Parents who claim Johnson Elementary School in Warrenville caused their children's respiratory problems have notched up their legal battle against Wheaton Warrenville District 200.

A class-action lawsuit has been filed in DuPage County Circuit

Court naming 42 children whose families contend they contracted sinus or bronchial problems from the school building.

The suit seeks at least \$32 million in damages against the school district.

"The children all have been sick," said Tom Zimmerman, an attorney for some of the parents. "And their parents have suffered various fi-

nancial damages."

The suit is similar to the one filed by a few parents in federal court last August. A judge ruled the case was under the jurisdiction of the state courts.

School officials, meanwhile, say tests at Johnson School show mold levels there are not high enough to affect children.

What's more, they have launched

\$600,000 in school repairs to ensure that airborne particles from carpeting or ceiling tiles will not harm the school's 600 students.

"We're continuing to monitor the circumstances," said school district spokeswoman Denie Young.

Zimmerman said parents have racked up huge medical bills, lost income because of missed time at work and had to acquire expensive

private tutoring after pulling their children from the school.

He added that parents also want a fund set up to pay for future medical expenses should their children develop more serious problems such as cancer or nerve damage.

"No one really knows what permanent bodily and health damage these kids have suffered," Zimmerman said.

The lawsuit seeks to close Johnson School.

But John Sluis, executive director of facilities in District 200, said school officials have launched major upgrades such as replacement of floor tiles and repairs to ventilation systems.

"The district has moved aggressively to correct any problems and review every issue," he said.