

# Dr. Bull Supports Efforts to Test Altama Elementary

October 2007

Dr. Bull, Superintendent of Glynn County Schools, signed a letter on October 3rd asking the EPA to re-visit our community's request to test Altama Elementary School for chemical contamination. Dr. Bull has joined the GEC, *The Brunswick News*, the Altama Elementary School PTA President, and others in requesting the EPA to follow the advice of the EPA Office of Inspector General and resolve the uncertainty caused by the previous erroneous testing. Everyone is now waiting for the EPA's response.

## Background

On July 10<sup>th</sup>, the Glynn Environmental Coalition (GEC) went before the Glynn County Board of Education and requested they join us in our request to the EPA to have Altama Elementary School tested.



The school abuts the Hercules 009 Landfill Site and toxic waste was removed from the school property in the mid-1990s. Recent developments have cast doubt that all chemicals were removed from the school. At the July 17<sup>th</sup> Facilities Committee meeting, Glynn County Schools asked the GEC to work with Jack Childs, the attorney hired to advise the Board of Education concerning testing Altama Elementary School. The GEC has had many calls with Mr. Childs, providing him information. His recommendations, in the form of a draft letter to the EPA, were presented at the October 2nd Glynn Schools Facilities Committee Meeting.

## Why was previous testing of the school insufficient?

The EPA Inspector General found that all chemicals were not reported by the method used at the Hercules 009 Landfill Superfund Site and appropriate testing is needed. Whenever toxic contamination is expected, the first step is to test and report what is present. If all the chemicals are

not reported, an assessment of the risks cannot be completed and an incorrect conclusion that the property is safe can be reached.

### **Are our children at risk right now?**

Without appropriate testing this question cannot be answered. The GEC hopes there is not a problem, but we need facts, and not just hope, to assure the school is free of toxic chemicals.

### **What was put into the Hercules 009 Landfill Superfund Site?**

Wastes from manufacturing toxaphene, full and empty drums of chemicals, and other wastes were put into the Superfund Site.

### **What is Toxaphene?**

Toxaphene is a pesticide that is now banned world-wide under the Stockholm Convention, and also called one of the “dirty dozen” or “toxic twelve” chemicals that were so dangerous that they were banned from use through an international agreement developed at the United Nations. Toxaphene lasts a long time in the environment, resists breakdown, and can travel long distances through the atmosphere. High levels of toxaphene were found in fish and other animals in areas where it was never used.