

'Sick' **of mold** **at DOE**

'Toxic' trailer classes

By SELIM ALGAR

Black mold is rampant in aging Department of Education trailer classrooms across the city, according to a teachers union report.

As part of an investigation into mold poisoning at a Brooklyn elementary school, United Federation of Teachers engineers revealed that the substance is prevalent in the controversial "transportable classroom units."

"The problems identified in the TCUs are typical of many other units utilized by the DOE; they are prone to water leaks," the report said.

Kindergarten teacher Dana Tabeek said she began to suffer serious respiratory problems after a few weeks in the PS 209 trailer last year. She currently has a case pending against the DOE for failing to provide a safe work environment, said her attorney Ronald Katter.

"I started getting sick," Tabeek said. "I noticed stuff on the walls, in the student cubbies, on the books. My dream job was taken away from me, along with my health."

She eventually suffered a massive asthma attack that re-

quired hospitalization before she went on leave, according to court papers.

Her doctor confirmed that the ailment was related to damaging mold and UFT investigators who vetted the site confirmed its presence, papers state.

The UFT report said that Tabeek's aged trailer was meant to be temporary — but has housed students for the last 18 years.

The DOE remediated the site after her complaint, according to a spokeswoman.

Currently, there are 96 temporary trailers hosting roughly 3,000 students still in use across the city, the DOE said Friday.

The department said new funds have been secured to eventually eliminate the trailers, but a spokesperson could not provide a specific timetable.

"The health and well-being of all students and staff is our priority, and any reports of potential mold are immediately inspected and addressed," said DOE spokeswoman Miranda Barbot. "All custodial engineers are trained annually in recognizing potential mold, and remediation was successfully completed at PS 209 in November 2017."

The UFT declined to comment.