



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Chief Operating Officer

April 22, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As educators, your child's safety is our first priority. That's why we're writing to update you about the ways we test the water in our schools.

Since 2007, the Department of General Services (DGS) has conducted annual water testing in all DCPS buildings. DGS hires a third-party contractor to conduct these tests.

When water is tested at a school, two separate water samples are collected from every known drinking-water source in the building, which are then delivered to a lab for analysis. The Certified Drinking Water Sampler enters the buildings very early in the morning to ensure that the water system has not been used for at least eight hours prior to testing. A building custodian accompanies the tester, so that all known drinking water sources are identified.

DGS and their contractors follow the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) guidelines to determine if there is an actionable amount of lead or other unsafe substances in drinking water. If a high level of lead or any other unsafe substance is found, steps are taken immediately to prevent students and staff from drinking the water. DGS then works as quickly as possible to fix the issue, which can include installing filters or replacing equipment. Afterward, additional water samples are tested to confirm that the fixes put in place were successful, before reopening the water source.

DGS has committed to re-test all water sources in DC Public Schools. We are working with them to ensure these tests occur as soon as possible.

The results of these initial and follow-up water tests are now hosted on the DGS website (<http://dgs.dc.gov/page/water-sampling-results-district-schools>). Additionally, DCPS will work with DGS to notify families of their school's yearly water assessment if it exceeds the EPA standard, as well as results of the follow-up test. More than 90 percent of DCPS school buildings have already been tested this school year. After more than 3,700 tests, DGS has identified 17 water sources at 12 schools with lead levels above the EPA standard. For each of these samples, DGS took action and re-tested the water. Each of those 12 schools will receive an individual letter explaining the details of their test results.

You can learn more about the national standards for water safety at schools on the EPA's website: <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-drinking-water-schools-and-child-care-facilities>. Additionally, the Washington Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) provides many services to District residents. Please see this letter from WASA's General Manager to learn more: <https://www.dcwater.com/lead/LetterToCustomers.cfm>.

The safety of your child is paramount to us, just as it is to you. If you are concerned about your child's health, we recommend you contact your pediatrician. If you have additional questions, please call (202) 442-5559 or email SchoolLeadQuestions@dc.gov. Thank you for your continued support.



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