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DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Screening Water in DPS Schools for Lead and Copper

Frequent Asked Questions (FAQ)

Although Detroit Public Schools has no indication of any problems with its water supply, and has not received any complaints related to lead and copper in the water in its school, the District is partnering with the City of Detroit to proactively screen all of its buildings. Special attention has been placed on testing all elementary-middle school buildings, as children up to age six are the most susceptible to the effects of lead.

IS DPS LEGALLY MANDATED TO CONDUCT THESE TESTS?

- No. This is a proactive, precautionary measure given recent reports of elevated lead levels in other communities throughout Michigan

HOW MANY SCHOOLS ARE BEING TESTED?

- 62 Elementary-Middle Schools
- 5 Middle Schools
- 16 High Schools

WHAT IS THE TIMEFRAME TO COMPLETE THE TESTING?

- All Elementary-Middle Schools have been tested (work was completed during the District's Spring Break, which occurred the week of March 28, 2016)
- All remaining schools will be tested by mid-April
- All results are expected back within 2-3 weeks of testing completion

WHAT TESTING PROTOCOL IS BEING UTILIZED?

- U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Procedures
 - \leq 15 parts per billion (ppb) for Lead
 - \leq 1,300 parts per billion (ppb) for Copper
- All samples are being analyzed at an accredited drinking water laboratory

WHO IS CONDUCTING THE TESTING AND HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

- DPS has contracted with ATC Group, a licensed environmental consulting firm that has a national presence
- Testing and analysis will cost approximately \$50,000.

WHERE ARE WATER SAMPLES BEING COLLECTED IN THE SCHOOLS?

- Samples are being collected from three high priority water outlets
 - Food prep sink in school kitchens
 - It is important to note that very little food served in our schools is prepared on-site. The majority is brought in “heat-and-serve” from our production kitchen
 - Drinking fountain in the Teacher Lounge
 - Drinking fountain used by students (two of these if no fountain in the Teacher Lounge)

WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN IF A TEST COMES BACK WITH ELEVATED LEAD/COPPER LEVELS?

- DPS will take the following steps:
 - Inform the City of Detroit Health Department
 - Immediately shut down the water outlet(s) in question
 - Immediately retest the school in question’s water throughout the entire school (not just the 3 initial testing points)
 - Bring in additional bottled water for students and staff
 - DPS already provides 8 oz. water bottles for its students through its Office of School Nutrition. It has done this as a part of the Health Kids initiative since 2011. Water is provided to the students at each meal and is available throughout the day. This has lessened use of traditional drinking fountains

HAVE ANY TEST RESULTS BEEN RETURNED? IF SO, HAVE ANY HAD ELEVATED LEVELS OF LEAD OR COPPER?

As of Wednesday, April 13, 2016, DPS has received test results back on all 62 schools initially tested the week of March 28, 2016. There are 19 schools whose test results have shown an elevated level of lead and/or copper. Letters have been sent home to all families in these affected school.

IS THERE ANY POTENTIAL HARM THAT CAN BE CAUSED BY A CHILD WASHING THEIR HANDS IN THE BATHROOM AT A SCHOOL WHERE THERE HAS BEEN A REPORT OF AN ELEVATED LEVEL OF LEAD?

No. No harm can come to students from using the water in this manner. The EPA states that to be harmful, lead must be ingested over a long period of time.

WHAT SHOULD A PARENT CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR CHILD BEING EXPOSED TO LEAD DO FOR ASSISTANCE?

- Contact their pediatrician
- Contact the Detroit Health Department
- Contact the United Way for Southeastern Michigan’s 211 help line