

**A NOTICE TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS, and STAFF**  
**Districtwide Lead Testing of School Drinking Water**

**July 8, 2021**

Safe and healthy school environments can foster healthy and successful children. To protect public health, the Public Health Law and New York State Health Department (NYSDOH) regulations require that all public schools and boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES) test lead levels in water from every outlet that is being used, or could potentially be used, for drinking or cooking. If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 15 parts per billion (ppb), which is equal to 15 micrograms per liter ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ), the NYSDOH requires that the school take action to reduce the exposure to lead.

**What is the “first draw” testing of school drinking water for lead?**

The “on-again, off-again” nature of water use at most schools can raise lead levels in school drinking water. Water that remains in pipes overnight, over a weekend, or over vacation periods stays in contact with lead pipes or lead solder and, as a result, could contain higher levels of lead. This is why schools are required to collect a sample after the water has been sitting in the plumbing system for a certain period of time. This “first draw” sample is likely to show higher levels of lead for that outlet than what you would see if you sampled after using the water continuously. However, even if the first draw sample does not reflect what you would see with continuous usage, it is still important because it can identify outlets that have elevated lead levels.

**What are the results of the first draw testing?**

The first draw samples were collected on April 13 and 14, 2021. The District received the final lab results on July 8, 2021. Given the volume of testing through New York State and limited availability of testing facilities, this turnaround was not unexpected. The first draw samples were collected from classroom sinks, bathroom sinks, kitchen sinks, and all water fountains and coolers that are currently in use throughout the New Paltz Central School District’s (NPCSD) school buildings. The test results with the locations where the samples were collected are available at: <https://www.newpaltz.k12.ny.us/Page/9915>

**What is being done in response to the results?**

If the lead test result for an outlet exceeded the action level (15 mcg/L or ppb), the following was done:

1. Outlets that tested with lead levels above the action level (15 ppb) were removed from service, unless an outlet is a sink faucet that is needed for handwashing. In that case, a sign was posted at the outlet indicating that the sink is not to be used for drinking. Outlets that tested below the action level remain in service with no restrictions.

2. The District will continue to provide building occupants with an adequate supply of water for drinking and cooking while remediation is performed and thereafter.
3. The test results have been reported to the Ulster County Health Department.
4. Upon receipt of the final batch of laboratory reports, which was received on July 8, the District has notified all staff and parents/guardians of the test results, as required. Guidelines call for notifications to be completed in writing, no more than 10 business days after the school received the laboratory reports.

In addition, NPCSD has developed a remedial action plan, which includes replacing fixtures, adding filters, and/or replacing valves and piping. In some instances, we will be closing or permanently removing outlets that are unneeded or rarely used.

**In all cases before putting any outlet back in service there will be a post-remediation water test with results that indicates that the lead levels are at or below the action level.**

### **What are the health effects of lead?**

Lead is a metal that can harm children and adults when it gets into their bodies. Lead is a known neurotoxin, particularly harmful to the developing brain and nervous system of children under six years old. Lead can harm a young child's growth, behavior, and ability to learn. Lead exposure during pregnancy may contribute to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. There are many sources of lead exposure in the environment, and it is important to reduce all lead exposures as much as possible. Water testing helps identify and correct possible sources of lead that contribute to exposure from drinking water.

### **What are the other sources of lead exposure?**

Lead is a metal that has been used for centuries for many purposes, resulting in widespread distribution in the environment. Major sources of lead exposure include lead-based paint in older housing, and lead that built up over decades in soil and dust due to historical use of lead in gasoline, paint, and manufacturing. Lead can also be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, foods, plumbing materials, and cosmetics. Lead seldom occurs naturally in water supplies but drinking water could become a possible source of lead exposure if the building's plumbing contains lead. The primary source of lead exposure for most children with elevated blood-lead levels is lead-based paint.

### **Should your child be tested for lead?**

The risk to an individual child from past exposure to elevated lead in drinking water depends on many factors; for example, a child's age, weight, amount of water consumed, and the amount of lead in the water. Children may also be exposed to other significant sources of lead including paint, soil, and dust. Since blood lead testing is the only way to determine a child's blood lead level, parents should discuss their child's health history with their child's physician to determine if blood lead testing is appropriate. Pregnant women or women of childbearing age should also consider discussing this matter with their physician.

### **How Do I Get More Information Regarding the Testing Program or Sampling Results?**

Please contact the Director of Facilities, Guy Gardner, at 845-256-4090.

## **Additional Resources**

**For information about lead in school drinking water, go to:**

[http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead\\_testing\\_of\\_school\\_drinking\\_water.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead_testing_of_school_drinking_water.htm)

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/LeadTestinginSchoolDrinkingWater.html>

**For information about NYS Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention, go to:**

<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>

**For more information on blood lead testing and ways to reduce your child's risk of exposure to lead, see "What Your Child's Blood Lead Test Means":**

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2526/> (available in ten languages).