



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Mark A. Holodick, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education
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Dear Families,

We wanted to make sure you had some background on the recent lead testing in Delaware schools.

We hope you will join us tonight for a virtual town hall to learn more about the state's school drinking water lead testing program. Please know we will continue to communicate and make ourselves available moving forward. If your questions are not answered tonight, you can also e-mail DDOE@doe.k12.de.us, and we will get back to you.

With the support of a grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) and the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) began a sampling initiative in Delaware schools in October 2020 to identify the levels of lead within the drinking water system. This was the first time the state has tested school water statewide, and several water sources not meant for consumption – such as in a boiler room and from a science lab sink – were included in this test. This initial testing was meant to develop a broad picture of lead issues in school drinking water statewide and allow for follow-up sampling and risk reduction efforts. Going forward, regular sampling will continue as part of the facility assessments required by SB-270. Further discussions on the frequency of sampling moving forward will be guided by results from this sampling, information in the US EPA's 3T's guidance document and Lead and Copper Rule.

By early 2022, every school in Delaware had been sampled and the initial results were analyzed by the Delaware Public Health Laboratory (DPHL). Results indicated lead may be an issue at a limited number of fixtures in less than 10 percent of schools. Schools with results that exceeded of 15 ug/L – the EPA's action level for enforcement - restricted consumption and were prioritized for resampling to better gauge risk, identify the source of lead, and guide risk reduction. The results, including initial results and some from resampling, were released in July 2022 on the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) [web page dedicated to the project](#). Unfortunately, those results were not uniformly communicated to the public, but the state is working directly with schools and districts to provide short- and long-term recommendations for remediation measures based on initial sampling and resampling results.

We acknowledge that missteps early in the testing program - including sampling while school buildings were unoccupied during the COVID-19 pandemic and testing on



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sources not meant for consumption - have led to confusion. We're committed to working with our school and federal partners and will maintain regular communication as the testing program moves forward to make sure parents and families get all their questions answered.

We are continuing to work with our federal partners at the EPA on this project. Late last week, the EPA asked us to shut off school water sources that returned test results between 7.5 ug/L and 14.9 ug/L - just below the EPA's action level for enforcement - out of an abundance of caution. Those water sources will remain under consumption restrictions while we review with the EPA our test results to date. Previously, we shut off water sources at a 15 ug/L level. The latest action was not a result of increased lead presence or risk.

You can find more information about the sampling results at your schools on the [DPH web site](#).

We are grateful for the school and federal partners collaborating on this project. We are working together and taking the necessary steps to make sure students have clean drinking water in schools and that families and the community are aware of the steps being taken. We welcome you to join us tonight to learn more. Please visit the following link to register for the virtual town hall [here](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark A. Holodick".

Mark A. Holodick, Ed.D.
Secretary, Department of Education

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Molly K. Magarik".

Molly K. Magarik, MS
Secretary, Department of Health & Social Services