



Pittsburgh
Public Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Public Schools Releases Results of Voluntary Lead Testing - Ensures All Students Have Access to High-Quality Water

New Bi-level Filtered, High Efficiency Coolers and Bottle Filling Stations Installed at All District Schools

PITTSBURGH, September 29, 2016 – Beginning today families across the Pittsburgh Public Schools will receive notification detailing results from voluntary water testing for lead at their school. This summer, the District proactively tested all sinks and water fountains at 70 facilities. Out of approximately 4,700 water samples, three percent (141) tested positive for lead levels above the recommended 20 parts per billion (ppb). Of those that tested positive, 14 were water fountains. In addition to testing lead levels and addressing any issues that were found, District facilities staff installed three to six new bi-level filtered, high efficiency fountain and bottle filling stations at all schools.

“Although there is no federal law requiring water testing, the safety of our students is a top priority,” said Chief Operations Officer Ronald Joseph. “It was important for us to take proactive steps prior to receiving any actual results. While we are relieved to learn that a small percentage of fixtures in our schools were found with elevated lead levels, the installation of 300 bottle filling stations across can help families rest assured that all students have access to chilled high-quality drinking water in our facilities.”

In addition to removing or replacing problem fixtures, all replaced fixtures were retested. The low percentage and remaining isolated fixtures, with lead level concentration at or above 20ppb, indicate that there were no source water or facility wide lead concerns. Remaining fixtures were either removed or labeled. Signage was also posted across schools to identify non-drinking water fixtures. The District has worked closely with the Allegheny County Health Department for guidance as it approached testing the water in schools.

“We applaud the proactive efforts of PPS to insure safe drinking water for our children. While we are concerned about lead in water we do want to remind parents that lead found in paint remains our chief cause of childhood lead poisoning in Allegheny County. Should families have any concerns about exposure either from water or paint, we urge them to seek testing through their water provider and their health care providers. We, at the Health Department, are committed to eliminating this risk in the county,” said Dr. Karen Hacker, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department.

In addition to receiving a letter in the mail with their school’s results, families will also find answers to Frequently Asked Questions. Complete reports detailing findings across the District are available at <http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/qualityH2O>. Families can learn more about the effects of lead on the Allegheny County Health Department’s website at <http://www.achd.net/lead/drinking-water.html>.

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