



# NEWS

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **District Releases Results of Voluntary Retesting of 2,314 Water Fixtures for Lead**

(PITTSBURGH, PA) December 6, 2019 — In 2016, Pittsburgh Public Schools was one of the first districts in the region to test its potable water fixtures for lead. Results from a retest of all District drinking water and cooking use fixtures are now available at [www.pghschools.org/qualityH2O](http://www.pghschools.org/qualityH2O). As part of the retest, which took place over nine months, the District collected 4,623 samples from the 2,314 water fixtures found in every school building and facility, using guidelines established in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) [3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare Facilities](#). Of the samples taken, 2.4% showed lead levels above 15 parts per billion (ppb), the action level established by a 2018 amendment of PA School Code Act 39, Section 742.

“We take our responsibility to ensure students and staff work and learn in healthy and safe environments seriously,” said Superintendent Anthony Hamlet. “While we are not required to conduct water testing, we believe strongly in the peace of mind we gain by ensuring all students have access to safe drinking water.”

The District implements the EPA’s two-step sample process. The two-step process consists of a first-draw sample being taken from the first water to come out of a fixture that has not been used for 8 to 18 hours after sitting overnight unused. The second sample, known as a flushed sample, is taken after letting the water run from the fixture for 30 seconds. All fixtures where lead exceeding 15 ppb was found were immediately shut off, and signage to prohibit usage was posted. Immediate action was taken by the District to repair or replace identified fixtures. The total cost for the testing at 70 District facilities was approximately \$242,403.

“We are very thankful for the diligence of our District facilities maintenance team and contractors for the level of guidance and expertise committed to this effort,” said Chief Operations Officer Pamela Capretta. “We know that managing the facilities of a 108-year-old school district requires regular check-ins of older plumbing fixtures and pipes where deterioration over time can result in lead entering our drinking water. By ensuring we are utilizing methods informed by the EPA’s 3Ts, we know we are implementing best practices to reducing lead exposure.”

Families received letters from their schools, notifying them of the retest and the availability of individual school findings on the District’s website. A Frequently Asked Questions document is also available on the site.

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