



BELLEVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent

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Dear Belleville Parents, Students, Faculty, and Community Stakeholders:

The Belleville Public Schools District is committed to ensuring the safety and health of our students, faculty, and staff in all district schools and offices. To protect our school community, the Board took the proactive step of contracting with an environmental consultant and, in strict compliance with New Jersey Department of Education guidelines, tested our schools' drinking water for the presence of lead. I am sending you this formal notice of our initial results and to inform you of the remedial measures taken immediately after receiving this information.

In accordance with the New Jersey Department of Education regulations, we are committed to implementing these immediate remedial measures for any drinking water outlet with a result greater than the action level of 15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{l}$ (parts per billion [ppb]). This includes "turning off" the identified outlet unless it is determined the location must remain operable for non-drinking purposes. In these cases, a "DO NOT DRINK – SAFE FOR HANDWASHING ONLY" sign will be posted.

Following instructions given in technical guidance developed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, we completed a plumbing profile for each district school. Through this effort, we identified and tested all drinking water and food preparation outlets. Of the 172 samples taken, all but 11 tested below the lead action level established by the US Environmental Protection Agency for lead in drinking water (15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{l}$ [ppb]).

The following table identifies the drinking water outlets that tested above the 15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{l}$ for lead, the actual lead level, and what temporary remedial action the administration has taken to reduce the levels of lead at these locations. In the coming weeks, we will be working on solutions to maintain a reduced lead level in these areas and conduct follow-up testing. Only after appropriate remedial measures and testing have been completed will the identified drinking water locations be placed back into service.

Sample Location	First Draw Result in µg/l (ppb)	Remedial Action
School #3 Main Office Sink.	20.2	Sign Placed “Do Not Drink – Safe for Handwashing”
School #4 Kitchen	74.0	Sign Placed “Do Not Drink – Safe for Handwashing”
School #7 Hallway Fountain by Teacher’s Lounge	17.4	Disconnected.
School #7 Hallway Fountain by Boy’s Room – 2 nd Floor	18.3	Disconnected.
School #7 Hallway Fountain by Room 15	18.7	Disconnected
School #9 Hallway Fountain 2 nd Floor	16.6	Disconnected
School #10 Principal’s Office	17.4	Sign Placed “Do Not Drink – Safe for Handwashing”
School #10 Hallway Fountain by Room 202	16.0	Disconnected
Middle School Hallway Fountain by Room 115	16.0	Disconnected
Belleville High School Room 132 Kitchen Outlet Sink Number 011	26.4	Disconnected Sink Outlet.
Belleville High School Room 132 Kitchen Outlet Sink Number 05	17.5	Disconnected Sink Outlet.

High levels of lead in drinking water can cause health problems. Lead is most dangerous for pregnant women, infants, and children under 6 years of age. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. Exposure to high levels of lead during pregnancy contributes to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. In young children, lead exposure can lower IQ levels, affect hearing, reduce attention span, and hurt school performance. At *very* high levels, lead can even cause brain damage. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults.

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like groundwater, rivers, and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and in building plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass,

and chrome-plated brass faucets. In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2% lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes, and other plumbing materials. However, even the lead in plumbing materials meeting these new requirements is subject to corrosion. When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into the drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning *may* contain fairly high levels of lead.

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of children under the age of 6. EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20% or more of a person's total exposure to lead.

A copy of the test results is available in our central office for inspection by the public, including students, teachers, other school personnel, and parents, and can be viewed between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The results are also available on our website at www.bellevilleschools.org. For more information about water quality in our schools, please contact Mr. Rich Henry, Facilities Manager at 973-450-3500, ext. 1007. You can always contact me as well at extension 1022 should you wish to discuss our findings and remedial measures further.

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/lead, call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD, or contact your health care provider.

If you are concerned about lead exposure at our school facilities or in your home, you may want to ask your health care providers about testing children to determine levels of lead in their blood.

I will continue to keep you apprised of our progress in maintaining safe drinking water in our district for all of our students, faculty, and staff.

Sincerely,



Richard D. Tomko, Ph.D., M.J.
Superintendent of Schools

RDT/dd

c: Richard Henry, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds
Board of Education Trustees
Principals
Matthew Paladino, Acting Board Secretary/Business Administrator
Thomas Egan, State Monitor