



May 18, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child's safety continues to be the top priority of DCPS. As such, I am writing to provide an update to communication sent last month regarding the ways we test water in our schools. I also want to let you know about some upcoming events in the city where you may learn more about lead and have your child screened.

Water Testing

As you may know, since 2007, the Department of General Services (DGS) has conducted annual water testing in all DC Public Schools to determine if there's an actionable level of lead in the drinking water. The annual tests are conducted according to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) guidelines by a third-party contractor on behalf of DGS. The EPA deems a test in a school water source actionable when there are more than 20 parts per billion (ppb) of lead detected. Out of an abundance of caution, DGS takes action at an even lower level of 15 ppb of lead detected.

If elevated levels of lead are found, steps are taken immediately to prevent students and staff from drinking the water. DGS also immediately identifies a fix, which may include installing filters or replacing equipment. After the fix, additional water samples are tested to confirm that the lead levels are no longer actionable, before reopening the water source.

DGS has committed to re-testing all drinking water sources in DC Public Schools by June 17, 2016. Results are being communicated to school communities as they are received.

Student Screening

The risk of a child getting lead in their blood from water is low. However, if you are concerned about your child's health, your best resource is your child's pediatrician. The District also wants to make sure families have access to free and convenient blood lead screening. As part of their standard lead outreach efforts, the DC Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE) will be offering free lead screening during a series of events listed below. Children under age 6 are at the greatest risk for health concerns due to lead exposure, but these resources are available to all District families.

- **Saturday, May 21, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., UDC East Capitol Urban Farm (across from Capitol Heights Metro station)** – This event is being organized by the University of the District of Columbia and by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. It will also include free soil testing.
- **Saturday, June 11, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Michigan Park (Bunker Hill Road NE)** - DOEE will provide lead screenings as part of a Managed Care Organization (Medicaid) organized event.
- **Saturday, June 25, time 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Raymond Rec Center** – DOEE will provide lead screenings at this event planned by DOEE's sub-grantee, the Ethiopian Community Center.

We are pleased to report that during blood lead screening at some schools that were recently identified as having at least one water source with actionable levels of lead, no students were identified as having blood lead levels greater than or equal to 5 micrograms per deciliter (the reference level set by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) as a result of exposure to the water sources at school.

Please be assured that the safety of DCPS students is our top priority, and we remain committed to ensuring that your children are safe. If you have any additional questions about the steps DCPS is taking to ensure our water is safe for our students to drink, please call (202) 442-5559 or email SchoolLeadQuestions@dc.gov. If you have additional concerns about your child's health, please do not hesitate to contact your pediatrician. Thank you again for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Kaya Henderson
Chancellor
DC Public Schools