

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES



June 6, 2016

Kirsten Oldenburg
Chair, ANC6B
921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20003

RE: Payne Elementary School

Dear Commissioner Oldenburg and Commissioners of ANC6B,

Thank you for your letter dated May 13, 2016, regarding lead-in-water inquiries at Payne Elementary School.

In response to your specific questions, please see below:

1. What is the methodology for testing lead in the water sources at Payne Elementary School?

The Department of General Services (DGS) hires a third party contractor, SALUT Inc., who employs Industrial Hygienists (IH).

The IH visits the school the day before collection to coordinate with the school's custodian to ensure early-morning entry and identification of water devices for sampling.

Two 250-milliliter (ml) water samples are collected from each device on school days before building occupants arrive to ensure that the water system has not been used at least six (6) hours prior to collection.

The samples are delivered to a third-party lab, AMA Analytical, Inc., for analysis with an average of five-business day turnaround.

- a. Per DGS documents, 16 locations were tested in 2014, 30 locations were tested in 2015 and 42 locations were tested in 2016. Additionally, the testing locations varied year by year. Who made the decision to test the sites that were tested between 2014 and 2016?

DGS' previous process included collecting samples from working water fountains and water coolers, and devices identified by the custodians as drinking sources. If water sources were not working they were not tested, which is one reason that the locations vary year by year.

Previously, the same water sampler was not always used when collecting the sample and may describe the location differently. We have addressed this issue by now using unique identifiers for each device to ensure consistency from year to year.

2. What is the protocol for sharing information and has the protocol changed to ensure that schools and parents are properly informed in the future of test results?

We have developed a communications plan with DCPS and the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) as part of our amended lead water protocol that will ensure that and Deputy Mayor's office and DCPS Operations are both aware of testing results and can communicate relevant information to their Principals and school communities.

DGS has completed the retesting of each DCPS facility and we are currently processing those results. A portion of retested school results are already posted to the DGS website at <http://dgs.dc.gov/page/water-sampling-results-dc-public-schools>, in alphabetical order. We are seeking to post new results every Tuesday.

Prior to the posting of results on our website, we send the relevant data to DCPS so that they can review the data and provide a letter to the school community about the results. Once any fixtures that tested high have had a filter installed and a retest indicating results within the EPA-accepted range, the fixture will be reinstated, and we will update the fields on the data on the school's individual results page to specifically note the results of the retest data.

- a. Why didn't DGS immediately share the 2016 results with Payne officials and parents?

DGS' previous protocol did not include notifying DCPS. Our process included forwarding results to DDOE for posting on their website.

3. Who is testing Payne Elementary School's water for lead contamination? When did DGS enter into the contract for these services? Please provide a copy of the most recent contract.
 - The Department of General Services (DGS) contracts with AMA Analytical Services, Inc., an Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP) accredited laboratory and MD State Certified Drinking Water [Testing] Laboratory.

- The Purchase Order Agreement (POA) with AMA Analytical Services, Inc. was issued October 1, 2015. Please see copy of POA, attached.

4. Who was the DGS official responsible for reviewing the lead results at Payne elementary?

As was the protocol at the time, the Environmental Health and Safety Group within DGS' Facilities Management Division was and is the initial reviewer for lead testing results. Last year, this group received raw testing results and shared collected results with the Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE) for posting on the agency's website.

When did this official notify you that there was a problem at the school?

As was the protocol at the time, during the school year 2015-2016 test, the determination that any water sources at Payne tested high resulted in the shutting off of the water source at those taps, installation of water filters on those devices, and retesting of those sites. The publically available document posted on the DOEE website reflected the status of testing at the school.

When did DGS notify DCPS that there was a problem at Payne Elementary School?

As was the protocol at the time, the results were shared with DOEE for posting on their website. Going forward, DGS has changed its reporting protocol to include DCPS, which will distribute letters to students and parents describing lead testing results (positive and negative). Further, DGS is now posting on its website lead water testing results, as opposed to sharing on the DOEE site.

5. Will DGS test students who previously attended Payne Elementary School for lead contamination? If so, when and how will you be notifying parents of this testing?

No, neither DGS nor DCPS have contacted students who attended Payne in the past, but no longer attend Payne. However, DCPS has contacted all DCPS families about lead water testing as well as opportunities for student screening. DCPS also shared information with the media, so the information about water testing and student screening is more publicly available.

6. Will water sources be tested at charter schools? If so, what is the standard for this testing and who is responsible for completing it?

The DC Public Charter School Board is in the process of testing all charter school campuses that have not had lead testing recently. This includes charters not housed in the DC/DGS portfolio.

7. Who is responsible for testing Payne Elementary School students for lead contamination this year, and is this the same party responsible in 2015?
 - a. Is it a DC agency or has the city outsourced this responsibility to a third party?
 - b. How much money has the city allocated for testing of students at Payne Elementary School?

We have reached out to the District Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE) for this information, but rather than delaying submission to the ANC, we will continue to work with DOEE to compile and will submit to the ANC upon receipt.

Very Respectfully,



Christopher E. Weaver
Director
Department of General Services

CC: Kaya Henderson, Chancellor, DC Public Schools
The Honorable Charles Allen, DC Councilmember, Ward 6