

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Lackawanna City School District to Remedy Potable Water Sources Where Elevated Levels of Lead Found

Lackawanna, NY (October 21, 2016) - In September 2016, New York State passed legislation requiring all public school districts and boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES) to test potable water systems for lead contamination. Should any elevated levels of lead be found, a district must then take action to remedy the situation back to safe levels of less than 15 parts per billion (ppb).

In order to comply with New York State and the Department of Health, the Lackawanna City School District followed protocol and tested potable water sources from all Lackawanna City School District Buildings. Tests were conducted at the McKinley Administrative Building, Martin Road Elementary, Truman Elementary, Lackawanna Middle School and Lackawanna High School. School officials received the water testing results after school on Friday, October 14, 2016. The report found multiple water sources where lead levels were higher than the required safety threshold of 15 parts per billion (ppb). The District is taking immediate action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, faculty, staff, and community.

The welfare, safety and security of Lackawanna City School District's students, families, faculty, staff and community is the District's main priority. We are taking responsive action to ensure each water source is fixed. All students and faculty have access to safe water sources such as drinking fountains and sinks within each school.

As a precaution, any water source with elevated levels of lead have been labeled and shut off. Follow-up testing is currently underway to determine where the lead is coming from. Any faucets, fittings or pipes that have been identified as a source of lead will be replaced. The District will collaborate with engineers and environmental specialists to determine the next steps. As a follow-up, additional water testing will be conducted to determine if the replacement/remediation was successful. Affected sinks and water fountains will not be placed back in service until testing confirms that lead levels are below the acceptable limit.

While the District waits for the tests to determine where the lead is coming from, it is known that the elevated levels are not coming from the water itself. All public water is subject to regular quality testing. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), lead enters drinking water primarily from eroding materials that contain lead, including faucets, fittings and pipes.

The affected buildings and water sources are listed below:

McKinley Administrative Building:

Four drinking fountains were tested and two showed elevated levels of lead. The affected water fountains have since been labeled and shut down. The lines will be flushed and then retested. This building is not used by students.

The affected water sources include at McKinley include:
Drinking Fountain on Second floor by Room 206 - 26.1 ppb
Drinking Fountain on Second floor by Room 209 - 16.0 ppb

Martin Road Elementary:

Twenty-one samples were taken. Of those samples, only one faucet in the kitchen has elevated levels of lead. This faucet is rarely used. A new faucet has been ordered and will be changed once it is received. This faucet will remain out of service until it's retested.

The affected water source at Martin Road Elementary is:

Kitchen Sink – 16.6 ppb

Truman Elementary:

Thirty-two samples were taken. Of those samples, 20 classroom drinking fountains have elevated levels of lead. The fountains have been labeled and shut off. It has been confirmed that there is not lead in the bubblers. The system will be flushed and all fountains will be retested. All five drinking fountains in the hallways are safe.

The affected drinking fountains can be found in the following rooms in Truman Elementary:

Room 5	25.2 ppb
Room 6	38.5 ppb
Room 7	31.3 ppb
Room 8	17.1 ppb
Room 9	30.2 ppb
Room 10	23.1 ppb
Room 11	35.4 ppb
Room 13	85.0 ppb
Room 15	42.3 ppb
Room 18	29.0 ppb
Room 19	33.4 ppb
Room 20	25.5 ppb
Room 21	51.0 ppb
Room 22	29.8 ppb
Room 24	16.0 ppb
Room 25	18.7 ppb
Room 26	21.9 ppb
Room 26	58.6 ppb
Room 27	23.6 ppb
Room 28	18.7 ppb

Lackawanna High School and Middle School

Eighteen samples taken. Of those samples, two have elevated levels of lead. They include a sink in the High School Kitchen and a sink in the Middle School Boy's lavatory. Both have been shut down and labeled. Faucets have been ordered and will be changed and then retested.

The affected water sources at Lackawanna High School and Middle School include:

High School Kitchen - 92.7
Middle School Boy's Sink - 51.9

We encourage our community members to contact their family physician or the Erie County Department of Health at (716) 858-7690 if they have any questions or concerns pertaining to lead testing and/or impacts on health.

For questions about our District's actions to remedy the elevated lead levels, please contact Lackawanna Board of Education President, Len Kowalski. He can be reached via email at lkowalski@lackawannaschools.org.

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