



September 5, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As you may be aware, HB 270, passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Larry Hogan on May 4, 2017, requires all school systems in Maryland to “test for the presence of lead in all drinking water outlets” in schools that are served by public water. Anne Arundel County Public Schools intends to exceed these requirements by also testing schools that are served by well water.

Our school system began this effort in March 2018, several weeks before the regulations that accompanied the law went into effect. The law requires that testing be done when schools are in session, and we completed testing at 33 schools before the end of last school year. We will resume testing now that schools are open for the 2018-19 school year.

Your child’s school has not yet been tested. Testing is being done on a geographic basis to minimize time needed to complete the work at all schools. A list of test areas and complete information on the process can be found at www.aacps.org/watertestresults.

The mandated sampling process is more complex than one may think. Our accredited, independent lab, Martel, must visit each school and assign a unique identification to each source to ensure fixture information is accurately identified and tracked for each water source. Prior to any sample that is taken, water must sit still in the pipes between 8 and 18 hours. All samples must be taken before students and staff arrive at school in the morning because if outlets are turned on and water flows, the integrity of the sample is compromised. As a result, Martel is able to obtain samples at approximately four schools each week.

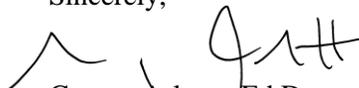
AACPS is testing more than just “drinking water outlets” at our schools. Bathroom sinks, as an example, are being tested as well. Drinking water outlets found to have elevated lead levels are shut off within 24 hours. Because the most common culprit of elevated lead levels is the actual fixture, those pieces are then being replaced. We will retest those outlets later in the school year, but they will remain inoperable until satisfactory lab results are achieved.

We are discussing various ways to speed up this process, including a contract with an additional lab, if one can be found that can handle the workload. As we continue testing, principals at all schools have been instructed to allow any student who wishes to do so to carry a water bottle during the school day.

It is important to note that as of August 23, 2018, we have results from 26 schools totaling 2,856 outlets. Of those, 207 have elevated levels of lead. Of those 207, however, 33 – or 1.16% of the outlets for which we have results to date – are drinking water outlets, with the remainder being fixtures such as outside hose bibs or ones in custodial closets.

We will continue to move as expeditiously as possible through this process as we can. When results are received for your child’s school, they will be posted on the web page cited above and sent home to you. A link to the Board of Education’s 35-minute discussion on this issue at its August 22, 2018, meeting can be found on that page as well.

Sincerely,



George Arlotto, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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