Gloucester Public Schools
Our mission is for all students to be successful, engaged, lifelong learners

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Dear West Parish Parents/Guardians, and Staff

This past June, the City of Gloucester applied for and was accepted into the Assistance Program for Lead in School Drinking Water offered and administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). This past fall, MassDEP examined water samples from all school faucets, fountains, and bubblers. At no cost to the City, these samples were analyzed for both lead and copper. The schools that were sampled include Beeman Memorial Elementary, East Gloucester Elementary, Gloucester High School, the Gloucester Preschool, Plum Cove Elementary School, the O'Maley Innovation Middle School, Veterans Memorial Elementary, and West Parish Elementary. The City received the water-sampling results for West Parish last week just before the holiday break.

It should be noted that the City has been testing for lead and copper for some time. Prior to this assistance program, and in compliance with MassDEP regulations, the City sampled two schools (bubblers and kitchen sinks) every three years, beginning in 2008. Results from those tests indicated no lead and copper beyond acceptable limits.

The most recent testing results at West Parish showed that there were no elevated levels of lead or copper throughout the building. The lead level threshold, according to the MassDEP is 0.015 mg/L action level (parts per million). For copper, the MassDEP action level is 1.3 mg/L.

In other schools, where trace amounts of lead has been found, the City has taken immediate action and sealed off the fixtures in question. New fixtures are being installed on affected units, along with a filter, and the water from any fixture for which there is concern will be resampled before it is put back into any type of use. As a precaution, the Dept. of Public Works (DPW) will follow the replacement of the faucet in question with a general replacement of other fixtures in buildings across the district. Water filters will be installed on all newly installed drinking fixtures. The City will take similar, immediate action with any other school results that are above MassDEP action levels.

The City and the Gloucester Public Schools take all results seriously and we will continue to take immediate action to safeguard the health of our students, faculty, and staff. The City will continue to work closely with MassDEP. Although it is of little comfort, MassDEP reports that close to 75% of the schools in the state that have been tested so far have shown results that require remediation. The City will make available all program sampling results.

If you would like further information, please see the information below. If you have any further questions, please contact me and I will arrange for you to receive an informed response.

Sincerely,

Richard Safier

Useful Lead Links and Information:

MassDEP Overview of Lead in Massachusetts Drinking Water: http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/overview-of-lead-in-massachusetts-drinking-water.html

MassDEP Lead & Copper in Schools: http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/lead-copper-schools-lc.html

Gloucester 2015 Annual Water Quality Report: http://gloucester-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3836
Massachusetts Department of Public Health "Lead in Drinking Water FAQ": http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/environmental/lead/lead-drinking-water-faq.pdf

EPA on Lead: https://www.epa.gov/lead

How Does Lead Get into Drinking Water? "Most lead gets into drinking water after the water leaves the treatment plant and comes into contact with plumbing materials containing lead. These include lead pipe and lead solder (commonly used until 1986) as well as faucets, valves, and other components made of brass. The physical/chemical interaction that occurs between the water and plumbing is referred to as corrosion. The extent to which corrosion occurs contributes to the amount of lead that can be released into the drinking water. The critical issue is that even though your PWS may deliver water that meets all federal and state public health standards for lead, you may end up with too much lead in your drinking water because of the plumbing in your facility. The potential for lead to leach into water can increase the longer the water remains in contact with lead in plumbing. As a result, facilities with intermittent water use patterns, such as schools and day cares, may have elevated lead concentrations. Testing drinking water in schools and EEC facilities is important because children spend a significant portion of their day in these facilities and are likely to consume water while they are there. That is why testing water from

your drinking water outlets for lead and copper is so important. Drinking water outlets are locations where water may be used for consumption, such as a drinking fountain, water faucet, or tap, or kitchen sinks." (From MassDEP http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/drinking/alpha/i-thru-z/lccaqa.pdf)