

# Smithton Community Consolidated School

District No. 130, St. Clair County

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February 1, 2017

Smithton Families:

As I shared with you in my recent newsletter and with the Belleville News Democrat on January 13, our school is concerned about ensuring we have a safe environment for our students and staff. On January 17, a new state law went into effect requiring all Illinois schools to test their water for lead levels. Our district had been proactive about water testing when we contracted with Environmental Consultants in 2015 to put a comprehensive environmental quality plan in place. At that time, there were no specific requirements or guidelines surrounding the testing of water for lead in schools. We opted to move forward with the testing as a precautionary measure. Each area of our school was tested to ensure that our school's source of water and our water lines were safe. Those results came back indicating our water was safe.

The new law requires more extensive testing—the water delivered from every fixture in the building is required to be tested. I contacted Environmental Consultants on January 13—two days after the bill was sent to Governor Rauner for his approval. I contracted with the organization to return to Smithton School and complete the additional testing needed to test the water from every fixture in the building.

The law is very specific about how the testing is to be completed. The water sampled must have been standing in the plumbing pipes for at least 8 hours but not more than 18 hours without any flushing before sampling. Environmental Consultants arrived at 6 a.m. on January 24 to collect the water samples. Two samples are required from each faucet—the first sample is considered the **“first draw”** and is taken without any flushing; the **“second draw”** or **follow-up sampling** is taken 30 seconds later after letting the water flow. The intent of this sampling is to replicate “worst case scenario” conditions and to determine if lead contamination may be in the water lines connected to the water sources and not just at the fixture. All samples were then sent to an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency-accredited laboratory for analysis for lead.

For Smithton, 56 samples were submitted for 28 faucets (one “first draw” and one “second draw” for each faucet). The United States Environmental Protection Agency's document entitled “Lead in Drinking Water at Schools and Child Care Facilities” indicates that organizations need to take action for drinking water collected from a plumbing fixture where lead levels test at or above

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20.0 ppb (parts per billion). Illinois law requires notification to parents if any water samples test above 5.0 ppb.

The good news for our school is that all water sources that children have access to from during the day tested well below the 5.0 ppb on the “second draw.” Unfortunately, **one drinking fountain** tested at 16.2 ppb on the “first draw” although the level is still under the EPA’s target level of 20.0 ppb. That water fountain, which is in Mrs. Beggs’ Kindergarten classroom, has been removed from service today. It’s important to note that the first draw was below the EPA’s target of 20.0 ppb and the “second draw” was at 2.9 ppb (below the state reporting requirement of 5.0 ppb). Despite the recommendation that we simply clean the aerator and filter on the water fountain, we made the decision to take the fountain out of service (and subsequently remove it) as the water pressure to the fountain is very low and there are ample water fountains right outside the classroom door for students (all of which tested at safe levels).

In addition to this water fountain, the classroom sinks in the three kindergarten classrooms and one of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade classrooms (Mrs. Lucash) tested at slightly elevated levels on the “first draw” but tested below the 5.0 ppb on the “second draw.” Finally, the hand sink in the kitchen had a “first draw” of 7.6 ppb but an unusually high level on the “second draw” of 943 ppb. Our Environmental Consultants representative indicated that the result was highly unusual and likely an anomaly in testing. To err on the side of caution, we have taken that sink out of service as of today. It has never been used to provide drinking water or food preparation water for students or staff—it is only used for hand washing. Our Maintenance Director has tagged the sink and will undertake the recommended cleaning of the faucet and it will be retested.

As you can see, the district is taking immediate corrective action on those few water sources that had either a “first draw” or “second draw” above 5.0 ppb. The remaining water sample results were all reported below 5.0 ppb and can be viewed at our offices if requested. The district understands the importance of this sampling and results related to the building occupants’ safety. The district is fully committed to ensure the safety of the building occupants is our highest priority in all situations. More information about lead drinking water can be obtained from the United States Environmental Protection Agency website at [www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/drinking-water-schools-and-childcare-facilities](http://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/drinking-water-schools-and-childcare-facilities).

Sincerely,



Dr. Susan Homes, Superintendent