

Elk Island Public Schools

Sept. 29, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Working with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Strathcona County, Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) is currently conducting a study on the level of lead in the drinking water at all of its schools. The study is a proactive effort to ensure drinking water in all of its buildings is safe for staff and students.

Throughout the month of June 2016, water samples were collected from the primary drinking outlets at all EIPS schools. Of the 42 schools within the Division, 11 school sites came back with results indicating one or more of its drinking-water outlets had minimally elevated levels of lead. The minimally elevated levels of lead seen at our school sites pose no immediate health risks to our students or staff according to AHS. However, as a precautionary measure, the affected outlets were taken out of service or a daily flushing protocol implemented while the source of the problem was investigated.

Retesting has taken place on all the affected water outlets, which consistently indicates lead levels meet the Health Canada guideline when the water is run for 30 seconds. Work is currently underway to remediate all affected outlets.

Below is an overview of the EIPS Lead In Drinking Water Study to date:

- Generally, lead in drinking water is the result of lead used in a building's plumbing components and not the result of lead in municipal-service mains. In our school jurisdiction, the main service lines are made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC).
- Preliminary findings suggest, lead is a possibility in any school's plumbing system if the building was built prior to 1990.
- Typically when lead levels exceed the recommended limits set by Health Canada, it's the result of water sitting in the plumbing components for more than six hours.
- As a standard practice, AHS advises people to run water until it is cold—both at home and school—before drinking.
- In June 2016, water samples were collected from the primary water outlets—fountains and taps—used for drinking or cooking at all EIPS schools. All initial sampling involved drawing water at the start of each morning—the first draw—which allowed the Division to determine lead levels in each outlet when water was sitting in the pipes for an extended amount of time.
- Of EIPS' 42 schools, 11 school sites came back with results indicating one or more of its drinking-water outlets had minimally elevated levels of lead.
- The 11 schools sites are: Ardrossan Junior Senior High; Bev Facey Community High, Brentwood Elementary, Fultonvale Elementary Junior High, Glen Allan Elementary, Ministik Elementary, Salisbury Composite High, Sherwood Heights Junior High, Strathcona Christian Academy Secondary, Vegreville Composite High, and Wes Hosford Elementary.

- As a precautionary measure, any drinking outlets with results exceeding the guideline set by Health Canada were taken out of service or a daily flushing protocol implemented while the source of the problem was investigated. It's important to note, AHS has assured the Division the minimally elevated levels of lead seen at our school sites pose no immediate health risks to our students or staff.
- Retesting was conducted again on all affected drinking outlets, prior to any modifications. The results of those tests consistently indicate lead levels meet the guideline when water is run for 30 seconds.
- Any plumbing equipment within the Division identified as a possible source for the minimally elevated levels of lead—such as valves, bubbler heads, and supply tubes—are being replaced and flushing protocols are being revisited.
- Retesting of all outlets is currently underway to determine if the remedial work was successful, if additional modifications need to be made or if changes to the Division's water-management practices are necessary.

A final report, including the EIPS Lead in Water Study, results, recommendations and actions taken will be available on www.eips.ca in the coming months. We will continue to update staff and the school community as new information becomes available.

If you do have questions concerning the [Lead in Drinking Water Study](#), EIPS has prepared a frequently asked question document, which is available online. Alternatively, you can contact your principal for more information.

For questions concerning potential health effects of lead in a school environment, contact Health Link at any time at 811.

Sincerely,



Mark Liguori
Superintendent
Elk Island Public Schools