



May 11, 2022

RE: Ongoing HCS Lead in Drinking Water Testing Updates

Dear Ooltewah Middle School Families,

We are writing to provide an update to our ongoing lead in drinking water testing efforts. In 2020, we began testing water outlets at our schools for lead as part of a new regulation in Tennessee for schools built prior to 1998. During Summer 2020, samples were collected from 2,540 different water outlets at 53 schools. During Summer 2021, an additional 1,126 samples were collected as part of a voluntary effort at schools built in 1998 or later. We are currently working to retest all schools built prior to 1998 that were originally tested in 2020 (now 52 schools as Harrison Elementary was reestablished in a new building in 2021). Samples from 24 schools were collected over spring break, and the remaining pre-1998 schools will be sampled during the summer.

TruPani Inc. recently completed testing at Ooltewah Middle School, collecting samples from 31 potential drinking water outlets such as classroom faucets, kitchen faucets, and drinking fountains. One sample showed a result of 151 parts per billion (ppb), which is above the State of Tennessee's action level of 20 ppb. This sample was collected from a pot sprayer/filler in the kitchen. As a result, the water source has been taken out of service and a sign placed on it to "Do Not Use" until it can be remediated and re-sampled. This out-of-tolerance result is limited to a single fixture. There is no concern about the overall quality and safety of drinking water at your school.

Lead typically enters drinking water due to the wearing away of piping, faucets, fixtures, and other plumbing materials. Because lead is tasteless, odorless, and colorless in drinking water, testing is a way to learn if lead is present. It is important to sample each faucet or water fountain that is used for drinking or food prep because test results can vary between outlets and various water chemistry changes can change levels over time. HCS has been working with a contractor to utilize results to identify and remediate sources of lead.

The lead testing results for schools are coming in on a rolling basis in the order that buildings were sampled. As such, notification letters and information will be released as results become available. More information on the lead testing, frequently asked questions, and the full testing results can be found on our [District Water Testing website](#). If you have any questions, please contact Tim Harper at harper_tim@HCDE.ORG.

Some best practices to keep lead levels low at schools and at home include:

- "Flushing" water, when possible, to allow drinking water that has been stagnant to move through the pipes.

- Using cold water for drinking and cooking. Hot water may increase the amount of lead transferred from the pipes or faucet, and boiling water does not remove lead.
- Discouraging drinking water from fixtures not intended for potable use (e.g., lab faucets, hoses, spigots, hand washing sinks). Hand washing is not a concern for lead exposure because skin does not absorb lead in water.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Sharpe
HCS Chief Operations Officer