



## **Guilford County Schools Water Testing Results**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

#### **1. What prompted the tests?**

Guilford County Schools (GCS) is committed to protecting students, teachers, and staff health, and works to ensure a healthy environment at our schools. High levels of lead in drinking water can cause health problems. Schools that receive water from a public water system are not required to conduct testing for lead in drinking water. However, GCS took this voluntary, proactive measure in partnership with the City of Greensboro and suppliers of municipal public water to our schools to further ensure safe drinking water in our facilities.

#### **2. What schools were tested?**

99 schools and 10 facilities were tested. Schools that were not tested were those that use a site well to provide water to the school. In those schools, testing already is required by NC DEQ to be conducted on an established schedule. In addition, other schools that are located within a local college building were not sampled.

#### **3. Is this the first year that the district has participated in voluntary water testing?**

Yes.

#### **4. When were the tests conducted?**

Sampling was conducted in February 2018. Initial test results were received in March indicating that indoor sample results from only three schools showed a sample result near or above the response level of 20 parts per billion. Those three schools are Southeast Guilford Middle School, Allen Jay Elementary, and Frazier Elementary.

Guilford County Schools used EPA's two-step sampling process to assess whether the higher lead sample reading was due to the faucet itself or the plumbing upstream of the faucet by sampling before and after flushing the faucet. Sample results following the water flush were very low, confirming that the source of lead in the water was the faucet itself, rather than the incoming piping or some other source, in each of the three schools that were retested.

GCS then replaced each of those faucets with new equipment, which does not contain lead at a significant level, and resampled the water from the new faucet. The laboratory results of the sample taken directly from the faucet after it had been replaced showed no detectable levels of

lead in the water, which confirmed that the replacement of the faucet was an effective remedial measure. A final report was received in June.

**5. Were these tests conducted at drinking water fountains, sinks, etc.?**

Sampling was conducted at a collection point outside of the school in order to test the quality of the water coming into the school. A second sampling was collected inside the school at a faucet selected to test the quality of water once it traveled through the pipe system. The sample collected inside the school was taken from water supplied to a sink, usually in the cafeteria, that typically is used for preparing food, cleaning utensils, washing hands and other tasks. Choosing one common location across the facilities enabled us to test every GCS school in partnership with our municipal water providers, who paid for the sampling and testing.

**6. Will there be follow up tests?**

Yes. GCS is continuing to assess school water and piping systems, and is planning additional sampling as part of those assessment efforts. GCS continues to work closely and in cooperation and partnership with knowledgeable staff of the City of Greensboro, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, and Guilford County Health Department.

GCS's additional evaluative, preventative, and remedial efforts will include the following:

- 1- Preventative - Flushing as a preventative measure to limit potential for lead in drinking water;
- 2- Evaluative - Survey of water and plumbing systems, including piping, faucets, and drinking fountains;
- 3- Evaluative - Sampling;
- 4- Remedial- Replacement of faucets/drinking fountains, capping, and signage.

**7. Was any treatment provided at schools where some level of lead was detected?**

Yes. Flushing and additional sampling were conducted at the three schools (Southeast Guilford Middle School, Allen Jay Elementary, and Frazier Elementary) where the level of lead was found to be at or above the 20 ppb response level at the sampled faucet location. This was done to confirm the source (i.e., fixture) and to confirm the success of corrective measures.

In addition, GCS is implementing a flushing program at every school. This is a precautionary measure that should further limit the potential for lead contamination from plumbing systems and help ensure safe drinking water for our students, teachers, and staff while additional assessments are taking place.

**8. How were the tests conducted?**

Testing was conducted in close consultation with City of Greensboro water supply staff using strict sample collection, testing protocols, and verification testing.

**9. Will other faucets be tested?**

Yes. The initial sampling did not indicate widespread problems. The three faucets that had lead levels at or above the 20 ppb response level were replaced. We are continuing our

assessment to help ensure safe drinking water for our students and staff. That assessment will include additional sampling and testing as well as other evaluative, preventative, and remedial measures, as appropriate.

**10. Will GCS monitor water quality throughout the year and report to the public?**

GCS is not planning to conduct water monitoring on a regular basis. Instead, GCS will rely on its water suppliers to continue to monitor water quality of incoming water supply sources. GCS will conduct additional preventative, evaluative, and remedial activities to help further ensure safe water in schools.

**11. Is there a present risk or potential for harm from the water at the schools?**

Initial testing showed that water supplied to each school is safe, and water tested inside each school is also safe, after remedial measures were taken at the three schools where samples were above EPA recommended action levels for lead.

Water from all faucets at all schools can be used safely for hand washing and other normal personal hygiene practices.

Water can also be safely used for drinking and food preparation. As a preventative measure, we are implementing a program of flushing faucets and drinking fountains on a regular schedule at each school. This flushing program will ensure that water can be safely used for drinking and food preparation.

We will continue to assess the plumbing systems and are developing a program to take additional water samples to identify any potential concerns. If sampling results are above EPA action levels, we will timely take remedial action to continue to ensure safe drinking water for students and staff.

If, in spite of these efforts by GCS, you still have concerns about the safety of drinking water at schools, we encourage you to provide bottled water (either packaged or a water bottle filled with tap water from home) for your child or children to bring to school and use for drinking.