

MANSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Teresa M. Murphy
Superintendent of Schools

Michael T. Connolly
Assistant Superintendent

Edward S. Donoghue
Assistant Superintendent

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To the Families, Staff and Students of the Mansfield Public Schools:

We are writing to inform you about our ongoing efforts to reduce the potential exposure to lead and copper in drinking water at our school buildings. In addition to the tests conducted twice a year by the Town of Mansfield, we partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) as part of a statewide program to conduct extensive testing throughout each of our school buildings. This program, which was funded by the state, allowed us to simultaneously test all water fixtures.

We tested any potential drinking water source for lead and copper on February 8 & 10, 2018. The sampling guidance from the MassDEP requires the fixtures to be sampled eight hours after a building has been fully occupied and in regular use. Samples were collected from all taps and fixtures used for drinking, cooking and medical uses at all schools. Samples were taken at each tap or fixture for both a first draw sample with the water standing in the tap overnight as well as a flush sample after the tap was run for thirty seconds.

Lead is not believed to be in our water source but plumbing and fixtures in our buildings may contain lead, resulting in an increase in the lead content in tap water. Exposure to lead is a concern because lead is a toxic metal that has a range of adverse health effects.

Copper is also not believed to be in our water source but plumbing and fixtures in our buildings may contain copper, resulting in an increase in the copper content in tap water. The same mechanisms that cause plumbing to contribute lead in drinking water may also contribute copper.

Below are results for each school in our district:

Mansfield High School

Lead: Out of the 32 locations tested, 9 sink samples had lead levels that exceeded the MassDEP, “action level for lead in drinking water at school and child care facilities.” All 9 samples tested below this limit when the flush sample was taken.

Copper: Out of the 32 locations, 5 samples (including 2 bubblers) had copper levels that exceeded the MassDEP, “action level for copper in drinking water at school and child care facilities.” Of the 5 flush samples tested, 3 were above this limit.

All students, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs including athletics and other extracurricular activities.

Action:

- Signs will be placed on sinks as needed to identify them as "hand washing only". The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MassDPH) states that water that contains lead or copper is not harmful if used for hand washing.
- Bubblers will be taken out of service.

Qualters Middle School

Lead: Out of the 38 locations tested, 8 samples (including 3 bubblers) had lead levels that exceeded the MassDEP "action level for lead in drinking water at school and child care facilities." Of those 8 samples, all but 2 tested below this limit after the flush sample was taken.

Copper: Out of the 38 locations tested, 14 samples (including 13 bubblers) had copper levels that exceeded the MassDEP, "action level for copper in drinking water at school and child care facilities." Of those 13 samples, 9 tested above this limit after the flush sample was taken.

Action:

- Signs will be placed on sinks as needed to identify them as "hand washing only". The MassDPH states that water that contains lead or copper is not harmful if used for hand washing.
- Bubblers will be taken out of service.

Please note that there are a greater number of samples at Jordan/Jackson and Robinson than at MHS and QMS. The elementary schools have more faucets and bubblers throughout the school.

Jordan/Jackson Elementary School

Lead: Out of the 140 locations tested, 29 samples (including 9 bubblers) had lead levels that exceeded the MassDEP, "action level for lead in drinking water at school and child care facilities." Of those 29 samples, all tested below this limit after the flush sample was taken.

Copper: Out of the 140 locations, 10 samples (including 4 bubblers) had copper levels that exceeded the MassDEP, "action level for copper in drinking water at school and child care facilities." Of those 10 samples, all tested below this limit after the flush sample was taken.

Action:

- Signs will be placed on sinks as needed to identify them as "hand washing only". The MassDPH states that water that contains lead or copper is not harmful if used for hand washing.
- Bubblers will be taken out of service.

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Robinson Elementary School

Lead: Out of the 96 locations tested, 39 samples (including 13 bubblers) had lead levels that exceeded the MassDEP, “action level for lead in drinking water at school and child care facilities.” Of those 39 samples, all but 1 tested below this limit after the flush sample was taken.

Copper: Out of the 96 locations, 21 samples (including 6 bubblers) had copper levels that exceeded the MassDEP, “action level for copper in drinking water at school and child care facilities.” Of those 21 samples, 20 (including 1 bubbler) tested above this limit after the flush sample was taken.

Action:

- Signs will be placed on sinks as needed to identify them as "hand washing only". The MassDPH states that water that contains lead or copper is not harmful if used for hand washing.
- Bubblers will be taken out of service.

Additionally, due to the large number of water bubblers that tested above the actionable level for lead and/or copper and are being taken out of service, the following plan will be put into place immediately so students have easy access to drinking water:

- Water stations will be located throughout the building utilizing water coolers and cups for students to access drinking water.
- Families are encouraged to supply drinking water/bottles from home.

We will keep you informed as we develop a long-term solution to address the drinking water needs of the Robinson students and staff.

Roland Green Pre-school School

Lead: Out of the 5 locations tested, all samples had lead levels that were below the MassDEP, “action level for lead in drinking water at school and child care facilities.

Copper: Out of the 5 locations tested, all samples had copper levels that were below the MassDEP, “action level for copper in drinking water at school and child care facilities.”

All participating Massachusetts school district results, including Mansfield's, will be published on the MassDEP website in the coming weeks.

The MassDEP Action Level for lead in drinking water is 0.015 milligrams per liter (also known as parts per million). The MassDEP Action Level for copper in drinking water is 1.3 milligrams per liter (also known as parts per million).

Per the MassDPH, it is unlikely that lead and copper in drinking water could cause children or staff to have elevated levels, however, it could contribute to overall exposure.

Families are encouraged to contact their family doctor with specific questions or concerns. In addition, we have provided the references:

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[Mass DPH: Lead in Drinking Water FAQ](#)

[Mass DPH: Copper in Drinking Water FAQ](#)

For further information on the MassDEP Drinking Water Program:

[Lead and Copper in School Drinking Water Sampling Results](#)

Mansfield Public Schools considers this testing program essential in safeguarding the health of our students, staff and citizens who use our facilities. We remain committed to keeping the public informed and following the MassDEP guidelines. Eliminating the exposure is our number one priority. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Teresa Murphy
Superintendent of Schools

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