

## **BURLINGTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS**

P.O. Box 428 - Hopkins Building, Burlington, NJ 08016, 609-387-3955

[www.burltwpsch.org](http://www.burltwpsch.org)

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December 16, 2021

Dear Burlington Township High School-Hopkins Building Families,

Our school system is committed to protecting student, teacher, and staff health. In July 2016, the State Board of Education adopted regulations regarding testing for lead in drinking water in public schools throughout New Jersey. The regulations were amended and readopted in August 2020. The amendment requires all covered entities to test for lead in drinking water every three years beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

To protect our community and be in compliance with the Department of Education regulations, the Burlington Township School District tested our schools' drinking water for lead in November 2021. The purpose of the testing was to identify and address any drinking water location above the EPA action level of 15 µg/l (parts per billion [ppb]). A drinking water location is an outlet that is designed or expected to be used for water consumption. These included, but were not limited to, classroom water fountains or sinks, water coolers, sinks in nurse's offices, faculty break rooms, and locations in kitchens used for food preparation. Bathroom, custodial, art room, and science room sinks were not sampled, as these are not expected nor designed to be used for water consumption.

Water was allowed to stay motionless in each facility for a minimum of eight hours prior to testing. After this time of inactivity, an "initial draw" sample was collected from the first water to come out of the outlet. After the initial draw sample was collected, water was allowed to flush for 30 seconds, and a second "flush" sample was collected. The purpose of the flush sample is to help determine if contamination does exist, whether it is originating from the outlet itself or from the building's plumbing. The results of the testing were presented to and accepted by the Board of Education at the first meeting after test results were received on December 15, 2021.

In accordance with the Department of Education regulations, Hopkins Building immediately implemented remedial measures for any drinking water outlet with a result greater than the action level of 15 µg/l (parts per billion [ppb]). This included turning off the outlet unless it was determined the location must remain on for non-drinking purposes. In these cases, a "DO NOT DRINK – SAFE FOR HANDWASHING ONLY" sign was posted.

### Results of our Testing

Following instructions given in technical guidance developed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, we completed a plumbing profile for each of the buildings within the Burlington Township School District. Through this effort, we identified and tested all drinking water and food preparation outlets at the Hopkins Building. Of the 22 samples taken, all but one tested below the lead action level established by the US Environmental Protection Agency for lead in drinking water (15 µg/l [ppb]).

The outlet referred to above was from a non-drinking water source. It has been designated as a non-potable water source and has been properly labeled.

The table below identifies the drinking water outlets that tested above the 15 µg/l for lead, the actual lead level, and what remedial action Burlington Township School District has taken to reduce the levels of lead at these locations.

Sample Location	First Draw Result in µg/l (ppb)	Other Relevant Information	Remedial Action
Kitchen Sink ID# TH KC1	186.0	The initial draw was 186.0 ppb and a flush draw the same day was 1.65 ppb.	Sink has been designated as non-potable and has been properly labeled.

At this time, permanent solutions for each of these locations are being evaluated. The District will notify staff, students, and parents as these solutions are implemented.

#### Health Effects of Lead

High levels of lead in drinking water can cause health problems. Lead is most dangerous for pregnant women, infants, and children under 6 years of age. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. Exposure to high levels of lead during pregnancy contributes to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. In young children, lead exposure can lower IQ levels, affect hearing, reduce attention span, and hurt school performance. At *very* high levels, lead can even cause brain damage. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults.

#### How Lead Enters our Water

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like groundwater, rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and in building plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass, and chrome-plated brass faucets. In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2% lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes and other plumbing materials. However, even the lead in plumbing materials meeting these new requirements is subject to corrosion. When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into the drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning *may* contain fairly high levels of lead.

#### Lead in Drinking Water

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of children under the age of 6. EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20% or more of a person's total exposure to lead.

#### For More Information

Test results are available for inspection in our central office between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. A copy of the test results are also available on our [website](#)\*. For more information about water quality in our schools, contact us at (609) 387-3955.


For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead), call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD, or contact your healthcare provider.

If you are concerned about lead exposure at this facility or in your home, you may want to ask your health care providers about testing children to determine levels of lead in their blood.

Sincerely,



Mary Ann Bell  
*Superintendent of Schools*



Nicholas Bice  
*School Business Administrator*

Enclosures:

[BTHS-Hopkins Building Lead Testing Results from November 5, 2021](#)

\*<https://sites.google.com/burltwpsch.org/business-office-and-operations/operations-departments/facilities-management-environmental-testing-results>