



November 21, 2019

Dear Custer Elementary Community:

In 2017, the Legislature directed the Washington State Department of Health to test for lead in drinking water in public schools in an effort to reduce children's overall exposure to lead in the environment. As part of our commitment to ensuring the health of our students and staff is protected, the Ferndale School District has voluntarily participated in the water testing program in all of our school buildings – including Custer. We want to share those results with you.

What did we learn?

On October 30, 2019, water samples were collected from fifty-three drinking water fixtures at Custer Elementary and tested for lead. This represents every fixture that provides drinking water to students or staff, or is used to prepare food.

Results show that three (3) water samples at Custer Elementary had lead levels above the EPA's action level for lead, which is 20 parts per billion (ppb).

What are we doing?

- The Ferndale School District received the notice regarding testing results on Monday, November 18th
- Maintenance staff removed the impacted faucets from operation the same day that we became aware of the results
- The Ferndale School District will replace the three fixtures that tested above 20 ppb.
- The Department of Health will test the impacted fixtures after they are replaced and before they are returned to use.

Why is lead a problem?

Children are exposed to lead from a variety of sources in their environments. Exposure sources include dust from old, deteriorating lead paint, contaminated soil, take-home exposures from parents who work in certain industries, and many others. Each of these sources contribute to the amount of lead in the bodies of children.

It is important to reduce exposure from every source as much as possible. Children six years and younger are the most susceptible to the effects of lead. Their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults and their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead. Even at very low levels of exposure to lead, children may experience effects including lower IQ levels, reduced attention span, hyperactivity, poor classroom performance, or other harmful physical and behavioral effects.

How can I learn more?

Water testing results are available at the district office and our website: <http://www.ferndalesd.org/facilities-maintenance/voluntarily-water-fixture-testing-program> . For more information about water quality in our schools please contact Ferndale School District Director of Maintenance Jamie Plenkovich at jamie.plenkovich@ferndalesd.org or 360-383-9234. If you are concerned that your child has been exposed to lead for any reason ask your healthcare provider about having them screened for lead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Quinn".

Linda Quinn, Superintendent
Ferndale School District

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Plenkovich".

Jamie Plenkovich, Director of Facilities and Maintenance
Ferndale School District