



Northwest Educational Service District 189

Together We Can

Board of Directors:

Claudia Buxton
Charles Crabtree
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1601 R Avenue, Anacortes, WA 98221
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www.nwesd.org

Larry Francois, *Superintendent*

10/08/2019

Dear Whatcom Discovery School 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, we have been participating in this program in cooperation with the Ferndale School District.

What did we learn?

On 10/02/2019, DOH staff sampled all the faucets at Mountain View Elementary where Whatcom Discovery Center is located. This represents every fixture that provides drinking water to students or is used to prepare food. The testing was done prior to the school day before students were in the building.

The good news is that results show that only three of the rooms *in the wing we occupy* had more than 10 parts per billion (ppb) but less than 20 ppb. The rest of the rooms in the portion of the building *we occupy* had normal levels. The main kitchen had 30 ppb.

What are we doing?

- We took each effected fixture out of service.
- We are replacing each faucet and bubbler that showed 10 or more ppb lead with a lead free fixture.
- We are providing bottled water to staff and students until the water test results are normal.
- We are not using the water in the kitchen in food or as a drinking source until it tests normal.
- We will re-test water after fixtures are replaced.

Why is lead a problem?

Children are exposed to lead from 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 the amount of lead that may be found in our systems.

It is important to reduce exposure from every source as much as possible. Children six years old 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 Department of Health. For more information about water quality at Whatcom Discovery Center, please contact Anita Tromp at (360) 384-2222. 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,

Anita Tromp
Program Administrator



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