

GCPS Water Testing Fact Sheet

- Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) receives drinking water from the Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources, which sets water quality goals higher than those required by state and federal regulations and consistently complies with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Therefore, the water quality in GCPS facilities is comparable to water available to the public in any other county location.
- Superintendent Dr. Calvin A. Watts approved GCPS participation in the “Clean Water for Georgia Kids Program”, as a logical next step in a long history of actions to ensure that water provided in the district’s schools remains safe to consume. All school fixtures supplying water for drinking and cooking will be tested for lead in this initiative.
- GCPS has no evidence of widespread water quality issues in our schools. Rather, this is a proactive measure to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff, parents, and community.
- Testing will begin in January of 2024, with projected completion near the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.
- All schools will be tested, beginning with Elementary Schools, followed by Middle Schools, then High Schools.
- Per EPA regulations, the action level for lead in water is 15 parts per billion (ppb).
- The amount of lead in water depends on the temperature of the water, how long the water sits in the pipes, the acidity, and the types of minerals found in the water.
- Buildings built before 1986 may be at greater risk of exposure due to lead being an allowable building material prior to this time.
- Lead can enter drinking water when service pipes or fixtures contain lead that leach into the water over time. This is most associated with chrome-plated brass fixtures connected with lead solder. GCPS Construction Guide Specifications were modified in 1988 to align with regulations regarding no lead in building domestic water systems, and use of only certified lead-free water coolers in construction of new schools, additions, or renovations.
- Water samples will be taken by GCPS staff trained in appropriate sampling methods, and samples will be tested by RTI International, a North Carolina based commercial laboratory that has partnered with the Georgia State Board of Education to support the water testing program. RTI International is an EPA Accredited Lead Testing Laboratory.
- Water sources with results above the EPA action level will be immediately shut off, remediated promptly, and resampled to confirm results below the action level before they on again.