West Seneca Central School District

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Superintendent of Schools

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RE: Lead in Drinking Water Testing – Northwood Elementary

Dear Northwood Elementary Parents, Guardians, and Building Occupants,

New York State Public Health Law requires all public schools to test drinking water outlets for lead every three years to help protect student and staff health. As part of this mandate, water outlets that have not been used for 8–18 hours are sampled ("first-draw" samples) and analyzed by a certified laboratory. If lead is detected above the state action level, the outlet must be removed from service for drinking or cooking until it is remediated and passes re-testing.

In 2022, the New York State Legislature and Department of Health updated the regulation by lowering the action level for lead in school drinking water from 15 parts per billion (ppb) to 5 ppb. This more protective standard reflects improved scientific understanding and the recognition that even low levels of lead exposure can pose health risks to children. Because of this updated threshold, some outlets that were previously compliant under the 15 ppb standard now require remediation even though no new plumbing issues have occurred.

Lead in drinking water typically does not come from the water source itself, but rather from building plumbing components—such as older fixtures, solder, fittings, and valves. Even modern "lead-free" fixtures can contain trace amounts of lead that may leach into water when it sits unused in pipes for several hours.

The West Seneca Central School District has completed the most recent round of testing in accordance with these updated regulations. **At Northwood Elementary School, all outlets tested below the New York State action level of 5 ppb. There were no exceedances and no outlets required remediation or removal from service.**

Safe and compliant drinking water continues to be available throughout the building at bottle-filling stations, drinking fountains, approved kitchen outlets, and designated staff locations. Although no corrective actions were necessary, the district remains fully committed to transparency, proactive communication, and ongoing compliance.

Notes on Sampling:

• All results are measured in parts per billion (ppb).

• All samples are first-draw samples collected after water has been stagnant for 8–18 hours, as required by New York State.

• This method is intentionally conservative and designed to detect the highest possible lead levels that could occur after overnight stagnation.

• As a general practice, families may consider flushing household faucets for several seconds before using water for drinking or cooking—especially in older homes.

The district will continue to follow all requirements of the updated Public Health Law and Department of Health regulations. All outlets will be included again in the next required testing cycle.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.