West Seneca Central School District

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November 19th, 2025
RE: Lead in Drinking Water Testing – Winchester BOCES Academy

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" components 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 completed its most recent round of required testing in accordance with the updated regulations. At Winchester BOCES Academy, several outlets tested above the new 5 ppb action level. All affected outlets were immediately removed from service for drinking and designated as "Hand Wash only/Non-Potable." The district has begun remediation steps, which are focused on drinking and cooking water outlets and include replacing hardware or designating non-critical sources as hand-washing only. Once remediation is complete, each targeted outlet will be re-tested to confirm compliance with safety standards before being restored for drinking or cooking use.

Safe and compliant drinking water remains available throughout the building at bottle-filling stations, drinking fountains, approved kitchen outlets, and designated staff locations.

Winchester BOCES Academy – Outlets Above 5 ppb and Remediation Actions

Room / Location	Fixture Type	Lead Level (ppb)	Remediation Plan
Girls Bathroom - Sink west corner	Sink	11.5	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.
Girls Bathroom - Sink north corner	Sink	8.4	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.
Rm 107	Sink	41.1	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.
Rm 101	Sink	10.3	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.
Rm 100	Sink	15.3	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.
Rm 104	Sink	5.2	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.
Rm 106	Sink	8.7	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.
Rm 110	Sink	11	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.
Rm 113	Sink	7.7	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.
Rm 117 Northeast	Sink	6.2	Temporarily designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable". Remediate, retest, reopen.
Rm 117 Northwest	Sink	5.5	Temporarily designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable". Remediate, retest, reopen.
Rm 141 (Lactation Room)	Sink	12.8	Temporarily designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable". Remediate, retest, reopen.
Rm 142	Sink	15.8	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.

Rm 118	Sink	5.5	Designate "Hand Wash only/ Non-Potable" with signage.

Notes on Sampling:

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

• All samples are first-draw samples, collected after water has been stagnant in plumbing 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 be encountered after overnight stagnation.

• As a general home practice, families may consider flushing 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. Any outlet that exceeds 5 ppb will remain out of drinking service until it is fully remediated and confirmed safe through re-testing.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.