Mount Olive Township School District

"Children are our first priority"

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Superintendent of Schools

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August 24, 2017

Dear Parents:

I am writing to let you know that we were informed this past August 8, that a percentage of our district's water faucets tested higher than the state guideline for lead (each school's percentage is slightly different). While most of the faucets passed including almost every student drinking fountain; under new state regulations, we are required to remedy each failed water source before any child can use the faucet again. I am attaching the notice that we provided on our website on August 8 (see notice at end of this letter).

Each of the faucet's identified as failing has now been remediated and a new test for those fixtures has been scheduled for this Saturday, August 26. The independent, state sanctioned, testing laboratory we employ to conduct these tests has informed us that they can have the results of the re-test within a week. Once the new test results arrive, I will release the results immediately (within 24 hours). If the district's remedial efforts do not work to reduce lead levels below the state limits, any and all drinking fountains or food preparation sinks will be shut off or removed/replaced. All other faucets, in accordance with state regulations, will be designated "not for drinking" while we continue another, more intensive round of remediation.

Why did some of Mount Olive's water faucets fail?

There are three ways that lead can contaminate drinking water in school facilities, the water source, the plumbing material, or the actual drinking water outlet fixture. Most sources of drinking water (e.g. ground and surface water) have no lead, or very low levels of lead (i.e., under 5 micrograms per liter [µg/l] or parts per billion [ppb]). Once the drinking water leaves the public water supply system or treatment plant, it comes into contact with piping and plumbing materials that may contain lead. Some lead may get into the water from the distribution system – the network of pipes that carry the water to homes, businesses, and schools in the community. Our schools, like all buildings, have some lead components in their distribution systems, such as lead joints in cast iron mains, service connections, pigtails, and goosenecks. Interior plumbing, soldered joints, leaded brass fittings, and various drinking water outlets can also be contributors of lead in drinking water.

All pipes in the Mount Olive schools are made from copper. We have brass and bronze fittings. There are no lead pipes anywhere in the school system. It is also important to note that brass

plumbing components also contain lead. Since 1986, all plumbing materials must be "lead free". Although there is an increased probability that a given plumbing component installed prior to 1986 could contain more lead than the newer components, the occurrence of lead in drinking water cannot be predicted solely based upon the age of the component or the school facility. The current law allows plumbing materials up to 0.25 percent lead to be labeled as "lead free". However, prior to January 4, 2014, "lead free" allowed up to 8 percent lead content of the wetted surfaces of plumbing products including those labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified.

Water is corrosive. When it sits in pipes for long periods of time, such as it does over the summertime, it leaches into the brass or metal fixtures and some lead residue may be released. Typically, when the tap is run, this lead residue flows out. Within even a few seconds, depending on the amount of residue, the water becomes pure. (This is why it is always a good idea to let the water flow for a few seconds in any fountain or faucet before consuming the water).

Our schools were tested in late July. The failed faucets contained enough of this residue to exceed state safety limits.

Is there a risk to Mount Olive's children? Is the school's water safe?

The water in our schools is safe; safer than it has ever been. Governmental agencies such as the EPA are constantly raising the standard for clean water. In fact, it was a new state regulation enacted just last year that alerted us to the lead residues we are dealing with today. Even 10 years ago, lead testing of water was rare in schools or other public places. The new awareness of the potential hazards of lead in water and the actions taken to remedy issues is making our children's water supply much safer.

A word of warning however; it is unlikely that the ONLY facilities in Mount Olive with lead in the water above state limits are the township's schools. If there is lead in the water in the schools, there is good chance it is in the surrounding homes as well. While there are no regulations to mandate testing, we urge all Mount Olive patrons interested in water quality to have their own homes tested for lead in the water supply. If found, it should be remediated.

While there is no doubt that all of us have been drinking water tainted with lead contaminants for decades, lead exposure over time has been shown to cause serious health concerns (see attached letter) in some people. As a result, we are fully supportive of the state's efforts in this area; it behooves all Mount Olive residents and organizations to have their water tested for lead and other contaminants.

Why are schools being tested now?

As mentioned earlier, the state recently enacted regulations requiring all public schools to test for the presence of lead contaminants in the drinking water. If found, it must be remediated. The relevant requirements are as follows:

All district boards of education shall submit to the Department on an annual basis a statement of assurance that lead testing was completed in accordance with these rules, that notifications were provided consistent with this subchapter, and that alternate drinking water continues to be made available to all students and staff.

With respect to notice…

Every district must make all test results available at the school facility and on the district's website.

The regulations also require notification to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), as well as to parents, in any instances where positive results over the established level are reported. This is why we posted our results on the website the day we received them and why we are sending this letter now.

When we received the new results (August 8), no students were in school, many families were on vacation, school staff were off. We thought to send parents a personal notice once things got back to "regular order", and when we had some idea as to what our remedial efforts were to be. Some remedial efforts we are taking involve changing out a fixture, some involve replacing a fixture filter, some are to simply disconnect or remove certain fixtures.

We won't have a finalized listing of permanent actions until we receive the results of our scheduled **re-test this coming Saturday, August 26**. If these efforts work for each failed faucet, we will publish our permanent remedial efforts. If the "fix" does not lower lead content in that faucet, as mentioned earlier, we will shut the faucet down, while we work on more intensive remedies.

Original NOTICE

August 8, 2017

Dear CMS Community,

Our school system is committed to protecting student, teacher, and staff health. To protect our community and be in compliance with the Department of Education regulations, Mount Olive Township Schools tested our schools' drinking water for lead.

In accordance with the Department of Education regulations, CMS will implement immediate remedial measures for any drinking water outlet with a result greater than the action level of 15 µg/l (parts per billion [ppb]). This includes turning off the outlet unless it is determined the location must remain on for non-drinking purposes. In these cases, a "DO NOT DRINK – SAFE FOR HANDWASHING ONLY" sign will be posted.

<u>Results of our Testing</u>

Following instructions given in technical guidance developed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, we completed a plumbing profile for each of the buildings within the

Mount Olive district. Through this effort, we identified and tested all drinking water and food preparation outlets. Of the 75 samples taken, all but 33 tested below the lead action level established by the US Environmental Protection Agency for lead in drinking water (15 µg/l [ppb]).

The table below identifies the drinking water outlets that tested above the 15 µg/l for lead, the actual lead level, and what temporary remedial action Mount Olive has taken to reduce the levels of lead at these locations.

CMS

ID	Location	Outlet Type	Result (ppb)
CMS-SF-D66	Rm D66	Sink Faucet	22.6
CMS-DW-HCAFE	Hall at Café	Drinking Water Bubbler	38.6
CMS-SF-K2T	Kitchen-2 Tub Prep	Sink Faucet	24.8
CMS-SF-K1T	Kitchen-1 Tub Prep	Sink Faucet	40.0
CMS-SF-MAINO	Main Office Work Rm	Sink Faucet	23.0
CMS-SF-EXAM	Nurse Exam	Sink Faucet	26.6
CMS-SF-HA4	Hall at A-4	Sink Faucet	5250
CMS-SF-LIBRARY	Library Office-A12	Sink Faucet	37.6
CMS-DW-HA25	Hall at A25	Drinking Water Bubbler	24.4
CMS-SF-A17	Rm A17	Sink Faucet	124
CMS-SF-B40	Rm B40	Sink Faucet	92.7
CMS-SF-B39	Rm B39	Sink Faucet	21.2
CMS-SB-B27	Rm B27	Sink Bubbler	122
CMS-SF-B27	Rm B27	Sink Faucet	25.4
CMS-SB-B38	Rm B38	Sink Bubbler	56.4
CMS-SF-B38	Rm B38	Sink Faucet	144
CMS-SB-B28	Rm B28	Sink Bubbler	47.5

CMS-SF-B28	Rm B28	Sink Faucet	72.0
CMS-SB-B29	Rm B29	Sink Bubbler	28.0
CMS-SF-B19	Rm B29	Sink Faucet	102
CMS-SF-C44	C44-Music Rm	Sink Faucet	280
CMS-SF-C59	Rm C59	Sink Faucet	53.2
CMS-SF-C58	Rm C58	Sink Faucet	28.0
CMS-SF-C47	Rm C47	Sink Faucet	34.6
CMS-SF-C48	Rm C48	Sink Faucet	64.0
CMS-SF-C56	Rm C56	Sink Faucet	48.8
CMS-SF-C55	Rm C55	Sink Faucet	35.2
CMS-SF-C49	Rm C49	Sink Faucet	119
CMS-SF-C50	Rm C50	Sink Faucet	88.0
CMS-SF-C54	Rm C54	Sink Faucet	186
CMS-SF-C53	Rm C53	Sink Faucet	48.4
CMS-SF-C51	Rm C51	Sink Faucet	64.4
CMS-SF-C52	Rm C52	Sink Faucet	61.2

Health Effects of Lead

High levels of lead in drinking water can cause health problems. Lead is most dangerous for pregnant women, infants, and children under 6 years of age. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. Exposure to high levels of lead during pregnancy contributes to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. In young children, lead exposure can lower IQ levels, affect hearing, reduce attention span, and hurt school performance. At *very* high levels, lead can even cause brain damage. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults.

How Lead Enters our Water

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like groundwater, rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the

corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and in building plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass, and chrome-plated brass faucets. In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2% lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes and other plumbing materials. However, even the lead in plumbing materials meeting these new requirements is subject to corrosion. When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into the drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning *may* contain fairly high levels of lead.

Lead in Drinking Water

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of children under the age of 6. EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20% or more of a person's total exposure to lead.

For More Information

A copy of the test results is available in our central office for inspection by the public, including students, teachers, other school personnel, and parents, and can be viewed between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and are also available on our website at www.mtoliveboe.org. For more information about water quality in our schools, contact Dave Corso at the Mount Olive Board of Education Building, 973-691-4008

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at **www.epa.gov/lead**, call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD, or contact your health care provider.

If you are concerned about lead exposure at this facility or in your home, you may want to ask your health care providers about testing children to determine levels of lead in their blood.