



Water Quality and Testing at CMS

August 23, 2018

The safety and well-being of students and staff is a top priority. Water quality is a topic of utmost concern and this concern is exactly why CMS is testing water in schools and taking action if needed so that our water remains safe. We look forward to continuing to update and share information with all families and the community as this effort continues.

Goals and testing

Our goal is to test and take action as needed to repair, replace or remove any problem fixtures. We will do this first in all elementary schools, then middle schools and high schools during this school year. This work is being conducted with the leadership and guidance of outside experts. We began the testing in our elementary schools built before 1989 because older fixtures are more likely to need replacement and younger children are most affected by water-quality issues.

Communicating with you

As this water quality program moves forward, we will share information with families, parents and the community clearly and in multiple ways. We want to ensure you receive information that is timely, accessible and accurate on the results and actions taken at individual schools.

Information we will share

- Timeline for testing overall in all remaining elementary, middle and high schools
- Begin and end dates for testing at your school
- Results, analysis any changes/repairs/corrections made at your school

How we will share it

- Email and mail to your home address
- Connect5 calls
- CMS Water Quality Website
- Regular updates on CMS social media Facebook and Twitter accounts
- Discussions with school groups

Learn more

You can learn more about this water quality program, including testing procedures, results from tested schools and FAQs at the CMS and Water Quality page. It's accessible from the CMS website at <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/News/Pages/CMS-and-water-quality-in-schools.aspx>. We have summarized the findings to date below for your convenience. Anyone with questions about water quality testing results in CMS schools can email EHS@cms.k12.nc.us for more information.



Important Facts to Know

No school tested has shown levels of lead and/or copper in the general water supply above EPA guidelines. Individual fixtures within some schools exceeded the EPA alert level. Of 1,679 water samples collected across 58 schools, 3 percent (53 total) in 27 schools showed lead above EPA alert levels. All of these fixtures were replaced, repaired or removed.

All of these fixtures were replaced, repaired or removed. Most of the fixtures had not been in use for some time or were in areas that students and staff did not regularly access. Repaired and replaced fixtures have been retested and the water from them has been within EPA recommended levels.

Community experts have been asked for their opinion about levels of concern. Any amount of lead in water is undesirable. The EPA has set a level of 15 ppm (parts per million) as an alert level, meaning further testing and remediation should be done – these are the guidelines being followed by CMS with the guidance of independent, third-party experts. Area media outlets consulted other environmental experts and asked them to review the CMS testing data by area media outlets. Please see their comments below along with links for each story.

WCNC 8/2/18

Full story: <https://www.wcnc.com/article/news/the-defenders-dozens-of-cms-schools-report-high-lead-levels/275-579787935>

“As someone who has a child at CMS, I’m not overly concerned,” said Pillar. “What I saw in there would be almost no different than someone having their home tested and then addressing it.” Dr. Greg Pillar, Associate professor, Environmental Science and Chemistry at Queens University.

Charlotte Observer 8/13/18

Full story: <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/education/article216302980.html>

“Two independent experts who reviewed the CMS report at the Observer’s request also said it’s unlikely that anyone took in enough lead from the school water sources to cause health problems.

- *“You’re probably taking a bigger chance driving to (school) than you are drinking the water once you get there,” said M. Todd Coolbaugh, an assistant chemistry professor at Johnson C. Smith University who specializes in materials science.*
- *“It sounds like the risk is low,” said Stephen Graham, environmental health program manager for the Mecklenburg Health Department. The [Mecklenburg] health department investigates when doctors find lead poisoning or elevated lead levels in any Mecklenburg County child. Graham said the department gets about a dozen such cases a year and has not found any in the past three years where the children ingested the lead from water or where a school was the source of the problem. All cases traced back to consumer products (such as spices and incense) or lead-based paint, Graham said.”*