



ITHACA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent of Schools

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February 24, 2016

Dear Families, Caregivers, and Community Members:

I wish to personally thank all who have offered skills, thoughts, expertise, and concern to me over the past few weeks regarding the recent water test results at Enfield and Caroline Elementary. The water quality in Ithaca City School District buildings is a primary concern to me and all other members of my staff.

I also wish to provide you an update regarding the action steps that we have already taken to investigate the recent sampling results and to ensure that the drinking water in all buildings is safe. We have:

- Engaged an outside civil engineer who has begun an audit of the infrastructure at Caroline and Enfield schools to determine the cause of the elevated lead sampling results;
- Provided access to bottled water for students and staff at Caroline and Enfield schools since Wednesday, February 17th;
- Turned off all drinking water sources at Caroline and Enfield schools. These sources will remain turned off until we have gained an understanding of the cause of the elevated lead results and verified that the water meets all applicable environmental standards;
- Begun a comprehensive review of our historical water sampling data as well as our environmental compliance processes and procedures.

Along with Caroline and Enfield Elementary, the comprehensive review of historical water sampling data has included other ICSD buildings as well. Our investigation has revealed that the most recent water testing results for school buildings other than Caroline and Enfield is more than 10 years old. Some of the sampling results from August 2005 exceeded the action level. The 2005 sampling results may be viewed at <http://www.ithacacityschools.org/districtpage.cfm?pageid=601> and hardcopies are available at the school buildings.

Immediately, we will begin a thorough updated water testing and evaluation process in all district facilities. With an abundance of caution, while evaluating our buildings' water systems we will provide bottled water to staff and students. Bottled water

will continue to be provided in each building until we have verified that the water meets applicable environmental standards. Moving forward, we will:

- Sample the water in all of our school buildings for lead and copper levels;
- Turn off drinking water sources in all buildings;
- Monitor the usage of hand-washing sinks that exceed the 15 ppb action level;
- Share both new sampling data and historical sampling data as we receive it;
- Develop plans that address water quality management;
- Investigate and evaluate our past sampling procedures;
- Investigate the communication breakdown that resulted in the delayed notification of action level exceedances. To the extent permitted by confidentiality rules, the results of this investigation will be made available to the public in the coming months.
- Continue to collaborate with the Tompkins County Health Department, TST BOCES, health care providers, and parent groups; and
- Secure a third-party to serve as project leader for the evaluation and management of action steps.

Safe drinking water is a necessity for our students and staff. I promise openness and transparency as we navigate this complex issue facing our school community. In collaboration with you, I am confident that we will resolve the water quality issues and continue to provide the best educational experiences for our young people. As always, feel free to call me (607-274-6845) with questions, thoughts, or concerns.

Sincerely,



Luvelle Brown, Ed.D