December 13, 2018

Dear QACPS Families, Employees, and Community:

In May 2017, Governor Larry Hogan signed legislation requiring public and private schools to conduct periodic testing for the presence of lead in drinking water outlets. In response to requirements specified in HB 270, Queen Anne’s County Public Schools (QACPS) has tested water outlets at all schools for the presence of lead. The law requires that schools “must test for the presence of lead in all drinking water outlets” in schools that are served by public water. The law and regulation mandate that sampling must be done in water outlets while school is in session. QACPS began to conduct water testing in May 2018. However, no sampling could be done over the summer months. Further, the law and regulation require parents be notified of results, even if those results show levels below the threshold of 20 parts per billion (ppb).

QACPS exceeded the requirements of the law by testing all schools, even those served by well water (not required by law). The law and regulation define drinking water outlets as “an ice-making machine, a hot drink machine, a kitchen sink, a classroom combination sink with drinking fountain, a sink in a home economics classroom, a teachers’ lounge sink, a nurse’s office sink, a sink in a special education classroom, and any other sink known to be used for human consumption.” In addition to outlets designated as drinking water outlets, QACPS tested “bathroom and classroom sinks not clearly signed as not a drinking water outlet…” as stipulated in the regulation.

As of December 11, 2018, QACPS has results from 1,639 outlets; including drinking water and non-drinking water fixtures. Of those, 1,478 (90%) do not have elevated levels of lead, and 161 (10%) have elevated levels of lead. Of the 161, eight (.05%) are drinking fountains with the remainder being mainly classroom or science lab sinks.

If test results from a fixture was found to be above 20 ppb, the action level designated by both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), QACPS removed the fixture from use and implemented remediation measures. The fixture will not be returned to service until post-remediation testing confirms the corrective actions lowered the test results below the action level. It is important to note that there are sufficient working drinking water outlets at all schools so that bottled water is not needed. However, many students bring water bottles from home and may continue to do so.
The results of this system-wide testing revealed that less than 1 percent of drinking water outlets tested above the EPA action level. An overview of the testing and individual school results are listed on the QACPS website. More information about the law can be found on the Maryland Department of the Environment website.

Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season and blessings in 2019!

Andrea M. Kane, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools