

Office of the Chancellor

March 23, 2016

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Dear Families and Staff,

Recent events nationally and regionally have raised awareness, concern and questions about lead levels in drinking water. We want to assure you that New York City's water is extraordinarily safe. This includes water in the NYC schools.

There are a number of proactive, ongoing measures the New York City Department of Education (DOE) takes to ensure that the water in New York City schools is safe for students and staff.

New York City has excellent water quality.

New York City's water is of the highest quality, meeting or exceeding all federal and State standards. The City regulates its own watershed that surrounds — and protects — our reservoirs, and the water is tested over 500,000 times each year at various points throughout the system. Beyond these extensive measures, the DOE works with City agencies, including the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), to ensure our students have access to safe drinking water in schools.

DEP has invested more than \$10 billion over the last decade to maintain and improve our water supply infrastructure. Between 2008 and 2010, DEP worked with DOE and other city agencies to identify and remove lead service lines to schools and other municipal buildings.

DOE tests its water and addresses issues if they arise.

Beginning in 2002, the DOE partnered with DOHMH and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to test the water in DOE school buildings. Currently, in every NYC public school built before the 1986 ban on lead in construction, the water has been tested for lead. The vast majority are confirmed negative.

For those buildings that had even one outlet with results above recommended levels, we have been implementing a protocol, approved by DOHMH and based on EPA guidance, involving a combination of weekly flushing, equipment replacement and more, to ensure the safety of students and faculty. Flushing has been shown to be highly effective in removing lead from water because (a) flushing builds up the protective coating on plumbing pipes and (b) flushing moves old water out of the system and brings in fresh water.

Starting today, you can visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/watersafety.htm> to find a searchable database that will provide families with direct access to information about the water testing results for each school.

While there is no cause for concern about the water in New York City, we understand that you take your child's safety seriously. We share that commitment to safety with you.

Sincerely,



Carmen Fariña
Chancellor
Department of Education



Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH
Commissioner
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