

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON

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TO: Parents and Staff of RSU 9
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent
RE: School Lead Sampling Update
DATE: May 6, 2022

District administrators have spent the day reviewing water testing information and getting a much better understanding of the water testing data we received yesterday afternoon. We solicited the involvement of the Maine Drinking Water Program, the Farmington and Wilton Water Districts, and our RSU 9 Maintenance Team in this work. We are not done and will continue to review this data and information over the weekend. You can expect additional updates, including school-specific information from us, by this Sunday afternoon.

As of right now, we do know four things for certain:

- The cause of the higher lead content in our water samples that did not meet the new lead standard is NOT due to our water sources
- **RSU 9 Schools will be able to open safely this coming Monday**
- The new state expectations for reducing lead in drinking water set a high bar that we will be able to meet!
- We have an excellent plan drafted which will be receiving some finishing touches over the next 24 hours.

So far this year, Maine Schools that have had their water tested under the new lead in water standard have seen at least a 30% failure rate for drinking faucets in schools. In our review, we learned today that “Source water almost never contains lead naturally.” That water itself is corrosive and things dissolve well in water such as the lead used in plumbing and fixtures. Add to that, water in New England is more corrosive than in most of the country and problems can start up over time. As mentioned last night, our results were received late in the day, and since each of our kitchens had some tests above 4 ppb and we knew it would be most important for us to offer bottled water options to all students and staff at the outset we could not have school today. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we needed more information and a strong plan to open our schools safely.

We need to thank our local community partners, Walmart and Hannaford, for stepping in to assist us as we face this difficulty by donating bottled water, in all forms including gallons, and four-gallon jugs. They have also assisted us with water dispensers so we will be prepared to offer all students and staff this alternative on Monday.

Please know that the safety of your children and our staff is always our top priority in RSU 9!

“Preach, my dear sir; a crusade against ignorance.” Thomas Jefferson