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State of Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Health
Office of Public Health

August 8, 2018

Paul E. Nelson, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Tensas Parish School Board
512 Plank Road
St Joseph, LA 71366

RE: Drinking Water in Tensas Parish Schools

Dear Dr. Nelson,

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) conducted lead and copper sampling of the drinking water at 13 sites in two schools located in Tensas Parish. The results of the sampling analyses show that both Tensas Parish High School and Tensas Parish Elementary have some sites, six in total, that exceed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Action Levels for lead and/or copper. The EPA Action Level for lead is 15 ppb and the Action Level for copper is 1.3 ppm.

The following is a synopsis of the results, and I have highlighted the sites where testing detected exceedances of the Action Levels

	Date Collected	Time Collected	Results	
			Lead (ppb)	Copper (ppm)
Tensas Elementary School - DF-1 (Lower Hall)	8/1/2018	8:32 AM	**30.3**	0.867
Tensas Elementary School - DF-2 (Upper Hall)	8/1/2018	8:40 AM	**21.4**	0.305
Tensas Elementary School - DF-3 (Cafeteria)	8/1/2018	8:50 AM	**19**	0.486
Tensas High School - DF-B (By Office - South Wing)	8/1/2018	9:22 AM	11	**1.31**
Tensas High School - DF-D (Junior High Northeast Wing)	8/1/2018	9:35 AM	1.7	**1.76**
Tensas High School - KT-F (Kitchen 3 Compartment Sink Right)	8/1/2018	9:49 AM	**18**	0.249

While the EPA recommends that schools and child care facilities take action if lead samples are greater than 20 ppb, the LDH recommends action be taken if lead samples are greater than 15 ppb. The Tensas Parish School Board has already taken initial action by replacing all of the drinking water fountains in both schools. This is a great initiative

to ensure that old fixtures which may contain higher levels of lead than acceptable, are removed and replaced. Based on these results, we are recommending additional precautions: continued flushing of the system, making alternate drinking water sources available to students and staff, and investigating permanent lead control measures if tests continue to show exceedances.

Flushing – It is important to note that the samples were collected and analyzed during a time of year where the schools were not in session and children were not on site. Therefore, there is limited water usage which can cause higher than normal sample results for metals. It is strongly recommended that the schools continue to flush the piping system in the buildings in order to remove water that has been stagnant in the piping system. This will also better allow anti-corrosion treatment to take effect.

Permanent Control Measures – Furthermore, guidance from the EPA recommends routine, interim and permanent control measures and remedies for schools to follow if lead is detected. I have attached a document that addresses and answers questions about lead in schools and drinking water that you might find helpful as you address this situation.

Alternate Water Sources – Finally, until the lead levels return to acceptable limits, an alternate source of water must be provided to the students of these two schools.

Our staff will continue to work with you and the school system to monitor the school fixtures for both lead and copper, and provide any technical assistance as needed.

Please feel free to contact me regarding any of the enclosed information. I look forward to working with you to ensure the common goal of protecting the health of the citizens and children of Tensas Parish.

Sincerely,

Amanda A. Laughlin, P.E.
Chief Engineer and Safe Drinking Water Administrator
Louisiana Department of Health