

Rye City School District

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Interim Superintendent of Schools

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Dear RCSD Parents, Guardians, Faculty and Staff:

Over the last several months, concern over institutional water quality has been a significant topic of discussion in the media. **The District took the proactive step of testing the water in accordance with EPA guidelines each of our school buildings for lead, copper and coliform bacteria concentrations immediately prior to the Memorial Day weekend.** On September 6, New York became the first state to require schools to test water for lead. In order to meet specific State guidelines, we will be re-testing the District's water during the months of September and October.

How the RCSD Conducted Tests

The District contracted with QUEST, Inc. (Quality Environmental Solutions and Technologies) to perform sampling and manage laboratory analysis and reporting. QUEST collected representative samples from drinking and food service locations throughout each District building (e.g., water fountains and kitchen sinks) chosen in accordance with EPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency) guidelines. The company collected 153 samples from 51 locations. Each location was sampled according to the EPA protocol for testing, and each source was tested once for Coliform bacteria and twice for lead/copper. The first lead testing sample (first draw) was taken immediately from the water source without letting the water run before sampling with the intention of sampling the water in the specific fixture. The second sample (flush sample) was taken following a 30 second flush with the goal of sampling water from the incoming pipes and fittings. The samples were then tested by a New York State Department of Health ELAP (Environmental Laboratory Approval Program) accredited lab.

Coliform Bacteria

All of the District's water came back negative for Coliform bacteria. Coliform bacteria are organisms that are present in the environment and in the feces of all warm-blooded animals and humans. Coliform bacteria will not likely cause illness. However, their presence in drinking water indicates that disease-causing organisms (pathogens) could be in the water system.

Lead

Fortunately, very few of the water samples tested showed levels above the 20 ppb EPA action level. Of the 51 locational water samples we tested, only 3 showed levels above the 20 ppm EPA recommended limit after a 30 second flush. As you will read below, the District has addressed these issues.

Lead is a metal found naturally in the environment. It was widely used in plumbing fixtures, house paint and gasoline. Lead can enter people's bodies in the food they eat, the air they breathe and the water they drink. Young children between the ages of six months and six years are more likely to suffer health problems from lead exposure. In young children, lead exposure can lower IQ levels, affect hearing, reduce attention span, and hurt school performance. At very high levels, lead can even cause brain damage.

To protect public health, the EPA sets a limit for lead in schools and day care facilities of 20 parts per billion (ppb). If levels are above that limit, the EPA recommends taking action to reduce lead levels. The RCSD will hold itself to a level of lead lower than that recommended by the EPA: 15 ppb. Three additional locations were at or above the 15 ppb RCSD limit. The District has mitigated all drinking and food service water sources that tested above the level of 15 ppb before a 30 second flush by replacing faucets, pipes or fountains. In some instances, infrequently used water fixtures have been removed altogether. The District will re-test in the beginning of the school year to ensure mitigation has been completely effective.

Test results by school are below:

Midland School

Type	Location	Test Result	Action
Combination sink and bubbler water fountain	Inside Room 40 (Special Education)	.016 after flush (Within EPA limits)	Removed drinking fountain from all classrooms

Milton School

Type	Location	Test Result	Action
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Osborn School

Type	Location	Test Result	Action
Bubbler water fountain	Outside Library	.015 after flush (Within EPA Limits)	Replaced with a filtered bottle filler

High School/Middle School

Type	Location	Test Result	Action
Cooler water fountain	Outside Room 213	Elevated levels of lead after flush .093	Turned off pending re-testing
Hand washing sink	H.S. Nurse's office	Elevated levels of lead after flush .042	Added a water filter to faucet
Water fountain	Outside Men's Faculty Room	Elevated levels of lead after flush .033	Installed filter to existing chilled drinking fountain
Stadium water fountain	Inside Hot Dog Area	.018 after flush (Within EPA Limits)	Turned off. Will be replaced with filtered bottle filler

Copper

Copper is a reddish metal that occurs naturally in rock, soil, water, sediment, and air. It is an essential element for living organisms, including humans, and-in small amounts-necessary in our diet to ensure good health. However, too much copper can cause adverse health effects, including vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, and nausea. The EPA has established an "action level" for copper in drinking water. This action level is exceeded if the level of copper in more than 10 percent of the tap water samples collected by a water system is greater than 1,300 micrograms per liter (or 1,300 parts per billion).

Of the 51 locations we tested, only 1 showed levels above the 1,300 ppb EPA recommended limit after a 30 second flush:

Milton School

Type	Location	Test Result	Action
Sink	Interior of Librarian's Office B24	Elevated levels of copper after flush 5.9	Turned off supply to sink

Filtered Water Bottle Filling Stations

The District is fortunate to have received a number of filtered water bottle filling stations as gifts of the PTO/POs, and the District has purchased and installed additional stations. These filling stations effectively remove lead and other contaminants from water. There is one filling station at Midland, located in the cafeteria, and 6 more are being installed. There are 6 at Osborn, and one more is being installed. Milton will soon have a filling station in the main lobby; Milton's fixtures are all modern, refrigerated drinking fountains so the need is less at this school. The Middle School has 2 stations and 3 more are being installed. The High School has 15 bottle fillers, with 3 more being installed.

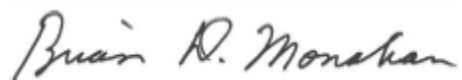
For More Information

You can see a copy of all of our water testing results at the School District's Central Administration Building, which is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or on our website at www.ryeschools.org.

You may find out if your child has been exposed to lead by having a simple blood test done by your child's medical provider.

For information about water quality at home, call the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian R. Monahan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue shadow effect behind the text.

Superintendent