



State of Utah

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Environmental Quality

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Alexa Cunningham
440 E 100 S
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Dear Superintendent Cunningham,

In January 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sent a letter to all State Superintendents recommending that schools test their drinking water for lead. The Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Utah Department of Health (DOH) reached out to several Utah school districts this spring seeking participation in a voluntary pilot study to sample for lead in the drinking water at their schools.

While most of the pilot study test results met federal guidelines, some of the samples showed elevated lead levels. Schools with elevated sample levels are conducting follow-up sampling, and DEQ's Division of Drinking Water (DDW) is verifying the test results.

DEQ does not have the regulatory authority to require testing; it is entirely voluntary. However, like you, we are very invested in the health and well-being of Utah's schoolchildren. That's why we **strongly urge** you to test each of the schools in your district for lead in drinking water. The best way to ensure the health and safety of your children and staff is through sampling the drinking water in each building.

Lead is a significant health concern, particularly for children, whose developing bodies are more susceptible to its harmful effects. Adverse health impacts from lead include damage to the brain and kidneys, reduced IQ and attention span, learning disabilities, poor classroom performance, hyperactivity, behavioral problems, and impaired growth.

While the drinking water provided by your public water supplier is required to meet federal and state lead standards, lead can leach from plumbing materials and fixtures after the water reaches your building and moves through your school's water-distribution system. Because school buildings tend to be larger, it's easier for water to stagnate in the plumbing and increase lead concentrations in the school above levels in the water delivered by the supplier. Testing each school building is necessary to identify and remedy any problems that may exist.