



Gardner Road Elementary School
541 Gardner Rd. • Horseheads, NY 14845
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October 14, 2016

Dear Gardner Road Parents/Guardians:

On September 6, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law new guidelines regarding water testing for lead in schools. Now, all water sources in every school building must now be tested every five years. The Horseheads Central School District has always maintained a strict adherence to federal guidelines in regard to water testing. In regard to the new law, Horseheads took immediate action to comply with the legislation in every elementary school building by the deadline of September 30, 2016.

The first results the district received were for Gardner Road, and they showed slightly elevated levels of lead in some fixtures. All sources of elevated levels have been identified, marked, and taken out of service in anticipation of immediate repair or replacement of any identified fixture. Our facilities staff has begun repairing or replacing these fixtures. They will work into the weekend and next week in order to remediate these areas as soon as possible.

In addition, alternate drinking water sources will be provided for any area that has a fixture taken out of service.

Please know that your children are safe. The standards for lead levels are very strict in order to protect students' safety. Prior to the new law, districts have followed the national and state EPA standard of 20 parts of lead per billion parts of water. This new law now sets the standard at 15 parts of lead per billion parts of water, making New York State's standard one of the strictest in the country. This means that if the concentration of lead in the water is more than 15 parts per billion parts of water, the district must take action and correct the water source.

We believe that with this stricter standard, we will see slightly elevated results in our other schools. We will not know any information until each specific building's test is returned to the district. Every school in the state is currently undergoing the same testing process, creating a backlog and timing issue for efficient testing.

Please note that in 2006, prior to water testing being mandated, the district conducted extensive EPA water testing in all buildings to make sure that all water sources met the required standard. Any fixture that did not meet the testing standard was immediately repaired or replaced in the best interest of safety. We wish to reassure you that the district and its operations and maintenance staff take this new standard seriously and will move rapidly in seeking remedies for any concerned areas. The district will communicate all water testing results on the district website at www.horseheadsdistrict.com as soon as they become available.

Once the identified fixtures have been replaced or repaired, the district will retest them and keep them out of use until the results from the NYS Department of Health are returned to the district confirming the correction of the initial test. We will do everything within our power to expedite this second water test and get it returned to the district as soon as possible.

Please know that our children's health and safety are our highest priority. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Patrick Patterson
Principal