



September 27, 2016

VIA EMAIL
Ref: 190736

To: All Superintendents
All Secretary-Treasurers
All School Districts

Re: Policy for Testing Lead Content in Drinking Water of School Facilities

Having safe and well-functioning school facilities is a priority for the Ministry of Education.

As expressed in the Ministry's letter dated February 24, 2016, school districts were reminded of the importance for ensuring water quality within all schools to reduce or eliminate any risks to students and staff, and were encouraged to work with their local health authorities to establish a plan to evaluate and mitigate any issues.

School districts are the owners and operators of schools, and under the *School Act* responsible for complying with all legislation and regulations from safety and health authorities. This includes conducting tests and remediation of issues, such as lead in water, if they believe it exists.

To provide guidance to school districts with this process, the Ministry of Education has developed the attached *Policy for Testing Lead Content in Drinking Water of School Facilities*.

The policy outlines the minimum requirements for risk assessment, water testing, mitigation strategies, as well as communication and reporting requirements. The policy is also available online at [Public Schools Policies](#).

There are two key aspects of the policy which school districts must fulfill and that are in effect as of the policy's "came into force" date of September 26, 2016;

- ***School districts must complete lead content testing on all school facilities once every 3 years. Therefore a minimum of 1/3 (or 33%) of the school facilities in a school district's inventory must be tested each year.***
- ***School districts must submit all of their lead content testing results annually to the Ministry by March 30th using the "Report for Testing Lead Content in Drinking Water of School Facilities" spreadsheet.***

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To assist school districts in the requirement to submit their testing results, the Ministry has developed a fillable spreadsheet entitled *Report for Testing Lead Content in Drinking Water of School Facilities* that is available at [Current Resources](#).

To support school districts in ensuring safe and well-functioning schools, the Ministry of Education provides funding through the Annual Facility Grant (AFG) for minor projects that will extend the life of the school or address any health, safety, or emergent issues that may arise. School districts may utilize funds in their AFG to cover costs associated with the testing and remediation of issues, such as lead content in drinking water of school facilities.

School districts also have an opportunity to apply for funding of future capital projects (such as plumbing upgrades) through the School Enhancement Program (SEP), in their annual Five-Year Capital Plan submission to the Ministry of Education.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Michael.Nyikes@gov.bc.ca

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Nyikes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Michael Nyikes, Director
Standards and Construction Branch

Attachments: *Policy for Testing Lead Content in Drinking Water of School Facilities*
#186335 Deputy Minister's Letter to Superintendents Secretary-Treasurers

Pc: Dave Byng, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education
Shanna Mason, Assistant Deputy Minister, Capital Division
Ryan Spillett, Acting Executive Director, Capital Delivery Branch
Carlo Vijandre, Manager, Facility Condition, Standards and Construction Branch
All Regional Directors & Planning Officers, Capital Delivery Branch