

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON

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TO: RSU 9 Parents, Guardians & Staff
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent
RE: District Water Testing Update
DATE: 5-11-2022

It is most important that I first take a moment to thank each of you for your patience and understanding as we work through concerns arising from our lead water testing results. As you should expect, we have been collecting more information, and data and talking with experts but have still only scratched the surface of what we need to know. We will take more time collecting the correct information about the details of water testing, review more of our previous testing data, analyze the new data, and develop a detailed plan for next steps to be shared with you. Over the next few weeks, we will continue this work and will update our new School Lead Sampling (Water Testing) page - <https://www.mtbluersd.org/school-lead-sampling> as information is ready to share.

Let me again take a moment to apologize for the lateness of this past Thursday night's decision to cancel school. We really did try to see how we could have school but felt that with our lack of good overall information to share quickly and time to take the steps necessary which ensured that none of the contaminated water be accessible to students and staff, it was better to call the day off. Unfortunately, we became aware of the testing information and potential steps that needed to be taken late Thursday. We then needed to develop a memo to give you as clear a picture as possible of what we knew at that moment. I canceled school so we could use Friday and the weekend to ensure that fixtures with concerns would be turned off and to develop better and more complete and accurate information with you before resuming classes.

As of now, I have listed below steps we are taking, information about water testing in general and the water systems that provide our schools' water supply.

Short Term Next Steps:

- The School Board approved the writing of a letter to the Maine Commissioner of Ed for our last student day to be waived. At this point if we were to try and make up this past Friday it would need to be held on Tuesday, June 21st as Monday, June 20th would need to be observed as the new Maine Holiday of "Juneteenth".
- We are in the process of retesting each fixture regularly used for consumption/drinking which did not meet the new 4 ppb state standard.
 - o This process will be somewhat delayed as we heard yesterday that the testing company has run out of bottles, so we are waiting for them to be sent.
 - o We were going to test a few fixtures that were missed along with all faucets in grades Prek-5 but were told yesterday that since there are multiple first-time tests coming in from around the state that additional testing will not be allowed until the fall.
- Mt Blue Campus and Mt Blue Middle School each had three fixtures (6 of the 54 concerns that came up in our testing) which did not meet the new Maine Standard of 4 ppb. Because these fixtures are isolated and not for consumption, these two schools can use all their present water fountains, bottle filling stations and will cook and prepare food starting this Friday from our regular sources. Some bottled water will still be made available.

"Preach, my dear sir, a crusade against ignorance." Thomas Jefferson

- Our five elementary schools had forty-eight of our fifty-four concerns flagged by testing. With this large number we have many more questions needing answers and so our PreK-5 schools will:
 - o Not be drinking water from the school’s regular source for the rest of this school year
 - o Be using bottled water for consumption/drinking and for cooking
 - o Continue washing/cleaning food and dishes with their school’s water source, as we have been assured that it is safe to do so by the Maine Drinking Water Program.

Long Term Next Steps:

- We are starting to plan for possible mitigation strategies which the new test results will hopefully make clear by completing a cost and time estimate of the potential remediation needs/fixes:
 - o Replace multiple faucets or purchase filtration fixtures
 - o Hire a Water Consultant/Specialist for filtration systems as our issues at our elementary schools may be more about some of our pipes than fixtures
 - With the review of our initial results, *one thing that jumped out to us is that our most-recent testing data showed that our bottle-fill stations, which have a filter attached, have the lowest results (<1) in our district.* The Maine Drinking Water Program Representative has suggested that we might want to assess whether this is a viable mitigation measure.
- Because of potential costs for the above we will hold off on looking to redo any of our parking lots this spring with available funds in the 21-22 Budget
- Continue to share information about our school specific water testing #s by including it on our webpage
- Investigate if there are state/federal funds to help cover the costs of our potential remediation needs
- Develop an RSU 9 Lead Testing Plan to include:
 - o Re-testing in 6 months (this fall)
 - o Then annually each May, if needed, to adjust during the summer before school restarts.

SOME EMERGING FAQs:

What were the rules for testing before the law changed?

Prior to the newly enacted Maine Law, Maine abided by the Federal limit for lead of 15 ppb. The Federal limit still applies. However, with the enactment of LD 153 - An Act to Strengthen Testing for Lead in School Drinking Water, Maine’s limit for lead is now 4 ppb and takes precedence.

Public Water Systems Serving RSU 9 Schools:

SYSTEM NAME	PWSID	Category	Type	Source	Source Type
Wilton Water Department	ME0091620	3T2D	C	Varnum Pond	IN
MSAD 9 - CCHS	ME0093887	VSWS	NTNC	402 Ft Drilled Well 8/1990 @27 GPM	WL
Farmington Village Corp	ME0090540	2T2D	C	Intervale Well #1 Grvel 7/1976	WL
				Town Farm Well #1 Primary 58’ 700 GPM	WL
				Town Farm Well #2 Backup 58’	WL

Legend

- 3T2D
- 2T2D
- VSWS Very Small Water System
- NTNC – Non-Transient, Non-Community
- C - Community
- IN - Intake Surface Water
- WL - Well - Groundwater
- PWSID (Public Water System Identification Number)

Do we have results by school the last time we tested?

- We are up to date with testing at Cape Cod Hill School - per info from the Maine Rural Water Coalition
 - o We have a Water Quality Control person who is our Licensed System Operator
 - Testing results for CCHS through the Maine Coast Lab (Water Quality Control) will be uploaded to the folder we have created by the end of next week.
- We have used the individual water source results from our two-water districts. Both the Wilton and Farmington Water Districts are also up to date with their testing, found under Further Information Resources on the next page.

When was the last time we tested? All Public water systems in Maine are required to complete testing based on the requirements of their system. Testing requirements and compliance results from testing may be found at the following link <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/pws/sampling.shtml>

To Find requirements click on this link:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/pws/requiredTests.shtml>

To find compliance results click on this link:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/pws/onlineSamples.shtml>

FURTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES:

Farmington Village Water District <https://farmingtonwater.org/>

2021 Confidence Report

<https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.33/489.7bb.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2021-ccr.pdf>

2021 Test Results

<https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.33/489.7bb.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2021-WATER-TEST.pdf>

Wilton Town Website - Link to Water/Sewer Department <https://wiltonmaine.org/depts-offices/water-sewer/>

2021 Customer Confidence Report

<https://wilton.maintowns.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/04/2020-Consumer-Confidence-Report.pdf>

For both, please enter the following PWSID (Public Water System Identification Number) into the space provided:

Wilton Water Department ME0091620

MSAD 9 - CCHS ME0093887

Farmington Village Corp ME0090540

As soon as we can clearly share information with you, we will let you know of updates to our webpage <https://www.mtbluersd.org/school-lead-sampling>

Thank you for taking the time to read the above!