



Information for Parents
Lead in Water Testing

April 20, 2017

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

For many years, the district has monitored the drinking water in schools. As a result, a *flushing* program was implemented and continues to this day.

Flushing is a procedure where a tap or fountain is left running for a minimum of two minutes and becomes cold, prior to consuming water. Island Health has agreed that this is an acceptable practice.

To address this further, appropriate signage (if needed) has been placed near the fountains or taps in every school. **Students, staff and parents will be notified if any concerns are identified.**

On Tuesday, a news story aired on lead water testing in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools. You can imagine it is somewhat challenging to provide a full report in a 30 second TV news story. I'd like to take this opportunity to share with you the full message shared with the news outlet.

Last year, the Ministry of Education released a [policy](#) for testing lead content in drinking water for all school districts in BC. School districts are now required to test all facilities once every three years, with a minimum of a 1/3 (or 33%) to be tested each year. The first round of tests were to be submitted to the Ministry by March 30th of this year.

Last week at the Business Committee meeting, district staff released the test results of 14 facilities (feel free to read the [presentation](#) or watch it [online](#)). In the presentation, it was indicated that there were zero second (pre-flush), 30 second, two and five minute samples taken. The results showed that 59% of zero second (pre-flush) samples met Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines. 98% of samples cleared to acceptable levels with two minutes of flushing – the remaining two percent will be addressed via the installation of new fixtures, or signage indicating that water is not for human consumption (eg. laboratory sinks).

Moving forward, the engineering firm provided recommendations in which the district will complete by the end of April 2017. Recommendations included the installation of flushing [signage](#) at most drinking water consumption points, the continuation of two minute flushing, and the installation of new fixtures or automatic flush valves.

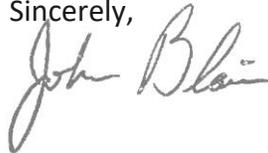
Principals of the schools tested met with district staff in early April and were informed of the test results and the work to be completed at the school. [Posters](#) were also provided to be displayed near drinking fountains or common areas.

Today, the Nanaimo News Bulletin published its [article](#) on lead water testing which included a quote from Dr. Paul Hasselback, Island Health's Medical Health Officer. In it he was asked if there is reason for concern:

"I think that this [testing for lead content] is just a reassurance that this is an issue that's being looked at ... we'll work with the school districts and we'll continue to work towards mitigating this. We haven't seen evidence of lead poisoning amongst students and there's nothing different here than what has been in place for probably several decades, because these are older schools."

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at (250) 754-5521.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Blain". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

John Blain
Superintendent/CEO