



Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools

400 EAST WASHINGTON STREET • CHAGRIN FALLS, OHIO 44022
PHONE (440) 247-4363 • FAX (440) 247-5883

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January 28, 2016

This morning it was brought to our attention that a message was posted on the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) website specific to the location of Gurney Elementary School, regarding water quality. This notification contradicts information provided to our district in November. The posted message reads:

"Children and pregnant women should use bottled water or water from a filtration system that has been certified by an independent testing organization to reduce or eliminate lead for cooking, drinking and baby formula preparation."

Although the below disclaimer is included on the web page, this posting is very concerning for our school district as student and staff safety is our first priority and foremost concern.

Please be informed that inclusion of an advisory on the Ohio EPA website does not constitute Ohio EPA verification of such advisory. The information posted is representative of data, received by Ohio EPA from various independent sources, which indicates that the situation warranting an advisory has been experienced at a public water system. Data received from such outside sources may on occasion be incomplete or inaccurate; Ohio EPA will make every effort to correct this information on our website should such circumstances occur. This website is Ohio EPA's vehicle for providing current, detailed information for the general public on drinking water advisories at public water systems, however, the posting of this information on the Ohio EPA website in no way negates the requirement for a public water system to provide legally required public notification to its customers. Additionally, please note that the Ohio EPA advisories website is currently only being utilized for health-related advisories, and is not intended to provide a comprehensive list of all of a public water system's violations.

The published warning completely contradicts all information, guidance and direction provided by the Ohio EPA regarding Gurney location. Below is a detailed timeline of events as well as actions taken by the district based on the guidance provided by the Ohio EPA over the last couple of months.

August 12, 2015: As part of our regularly-scheduled testing, water samples for lead were taken at Gurney Elementary from ten different distribution points. Two of ten samples were above the action level for lead of 15 micrograms per liter. This was believed to be due to high pH in the water contributing to corrosion of copper pipes through a lack of usage within the building over the summer months.

September 2, 2015: The two sample locations of August 12th were resampled and were under the 15 microgram per liter action level.

September 30, 2015: Water samples were taken from eight more distribution points within the building. One sample was above the action level of 15 micrograms per liter. The local EPA officials have reiterated that the elevated lead levels were from the water sitting in the pipes for an extended period of time and the low pH of the water.

October 30, 2015: The district received a letter from the water treatment operator with the Ohio EPA "Drinking Water Lead and Copper Monitoring Report" for Gurney Elementary. After consulting with the EPA for advice, the district contacted a local water treatment system company to modify the existing system to address the pH issue.

November 3, 2015: The water treatment equipment was upgraded to change from a powder-based pH balancing substance to a more effective liquid-based pH balancing substance. Ohio EPA officials were on-site to review and approve system modifications. The water was balanced and tested for pH. The Ohio EPA was satisfied with the modifications made to the treatment system.

November 6, 2015: The Ohio EPA sent a letter stating "Further Tap Water Monitoring Not Required Now."

November 16, 2015: The Ohio EPA representatives met on-site with school officials to review results from sampling and discuss updates to the water system. District officials specifically asked the Ohio EPA representatives if there were any concerns regarding consumption for students and staff. The Ohio EPA official said the water was safe for consumption. School district officials asked the representative if further modifications to the system were required. The representative said no further modifications to the system were required.

November 25, 2015: The school district, under direction of the Ohio EPA, communicated with families by posting required "Consumer Notice of Tap Water Results" on the school website. This was also distributed through automated email system on November 29th.

January 22, 2016: The Ohio EPA informed the district that two additional lead and copper samples would be required.

January 27, 2016: A water sample for lead and copper was taken at Gurney Elementary, and we anticipate the result on February 3, 2016.

There is an obvious discrepancy on the guidance provided and the information posted on the Ohio EPA's website. Today, we immediately contacted the Ohio EPA when we learned of this website posting notification. Our representative from this organization appeared to be unaware of the web notification. We immediately asked for direction on the consumption of water. After consulting with their offices, we have decided out of an abundance of caution to provide bottled drinking water. Drinking fountains have been shut off; water in restrooms can still be used for hand washing, according to the Ohio EPA. We have made the decision to increase the sample of distribution points to 20 to cover the entire building and will retest the main line again on February 3, 2016. Bottled water will be provided to staff and students until we are confident that the water is safe. We have been informed by the Ohio EPA that there are ongoing modifications to policy being made regarding potential lead exposure due to the most recent events nationally. We will post additional resources and information as it becomes available on the building and district webpages.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Hunt
Superintendent