



# LYNDEN

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Tradition + Pride + Excellence*

February 20, 2019

Dear Isom Elementary Parents, Students and Staff:

In 2017, the Legislature directed the Washington State Department of Health to test for lead in drinking water in public schools in an effort to reduce children's overall exposure to lead in the environment. As part of our commitment to ensuring the health of our students and staff is protected, we recently participated in this program.

### **What did we learn?**

On April 10, 2018, DOH staff sampled sixty-four fixtures at Isom Elementary School. This represents every fixture that provides drinking water to students or staff, or is used to prepare food. The testing was done prior to the school day before students were in the building.

Results show that the two water samples had lead levels above the EPA's action level for lead, which is 20 parts per billion (ppb).

### **What are we doing?**

- A water sample collected from a pot filler in the school kitchen tested well above 20 ppb. Fortunately, this fixture has not been used for drinking or food service for over 20 years (if ever). As a result of this extended period of non-use, water sat in the fixture for a very long time, and was likely a factor in the elevated test results. Regardless of the history of this fixture, it has been removed and the supply lines have been capped to prevent any chance of accidental use.
- A water sample collected from a classroom tap tested slightly above 20 ppb. This fixture has been removed and replaced with a non-lead fixture.

### **Why is lead a problem?**

Children are exposed to lead from a variety of sources in their environments. Exposure sources include dust from old, deteriorating lead paint, contaminated soil, take-home exposures from parents who work in certain industries, and many others. Each of these sources contribute to the amount of lead in the bodies of children.

It is important to reduce exposure from every source as much as possible. Children six years old and younger are the most susceptible to the effects of lead. Their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults and their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead. Even at very low levels of exposure to lead, children may experience effects including lower IQ levels, reduced attention span, hyperactivity, poor classroom performance, or other harmful physical and behavioral effects.

**How can I learn more?**

Water testing results are available at the district office and on our website [www.lynden.wednet.edu](http://www.lynden.wednet.edu). For more information about water quality in our schools, please contact Reed Gillig at 360-354-8679. If you are concerned that your child has been exposed to lead for any reason ask your healthcare provider about having them screened for lead.

Sincerely,

Reed Gillig  
Facilities Supervisor  
Lynden School District #504

**News Release  
Isom Elementary School**

**For immediate release: February 20, 2019**

**Contact:** Reed Gillig  
Facilities Supervisor  
Lynden School District #504  
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**Lead found in drinking water – sources removed**

LYNDEN, WA - On April 10, 2018, health officials from the Washington State Department of Health, in response to a request from Lynden School District officials, collected sixty-four water samples from water fixtures at Isom Elementary School. This effort was undertaken as part of a state-wide effort to reduce children's overall exposure to lead in the environment. The sixty-four samples collected represents every fixture that provides drinking water to students or is used to prepare food. Test results from the collected samples showed two fixtures with lead levels above the EPA's action level of 20 parts per billion.

Sample #1 was collected from a pot filler located in the school's cafeteria kitchen. While this fixture has not been used for food service for over 20 years (if ever), it has been removed. The second sample was collected from a tap located in a classroom. The entire faucet assembly and supply lines were removed and replaced with lead-free components.

"Our students' health and safety is our top priority. When we had the opportunity for the state to test our school's water we were happy to participate," said Facilities Supervisor, Reed Gillig.

The water testing followed federal and state guidelines for sample collection and testing.

Information about the lead testing program, including laboratory results, can be found at the district office Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.