

PGCPS Water Quality Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Water Quality Program?

The PGCPS Water Quality Program seeks to ensure safe drinking water in schools, centers and offices. The program includes lead remediation and other efforts to improve overall water quality.

When was Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) originally informed about the possibility of lead in school building and office water sources?

Some schools, like many old homes and large buildings, may have lead sources within plumbing systems. These sources typically include lead solder used to connect copper pipes and older plumbing fixtures containing lead. Since 2004, PGCPS has worked to methodically address lead in water sources, with drinking sources as the priority. The final phase of that work began April 2017. More than 1,700 fixtures in approximately 90 schools have been tested. Testing on the remaining schools is expected to conclude by January 2018.

Why is PGCPS conducting comprehensive testing of drinking water sources?

Comprehensive testing of drinking water sources will allow for systemic identification of major issues, any subsequent updates to our remediation plan, and other steps to address water quality. Comprehensive testing was originally scheduled for summer 2017. However, due to public inquiries about PGCPS water quality, the timetable was moved up.

What will happen during the system-wide tests?

Starting mid-April 2017, PGCPS will conduct comprehensive sampling and testing of drinking water sources at all schools and centers for water quality, including lead, working with the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) and an independent laboratory. WSSC will conduct tests to detect lead level in water samples collected by PGCPS at targeted school sites; PGCPS will handle the remaining schools in collaboration with the independent laboratory.

How many facilities currently have one or more drinking water sources valved (turned) off?

An estimated 88 facilities currently have one or more drinking water sources turned off. Most were valved off after the original round of comprehensive tests in the early 2000s. They are no longer in use. Since then, sources have been turned off as a precautionary measure when major concerns arose over the quality of drinking water. In those instances, bottled water has been provided as long as needed.

What should I do if the water at my school or office is discolored or has a foul smell or taste?

Please inform the principal or office supervisor. They will request immediate assistance from the Facilities Office.

What does a "non-potable water" sign mean?

A "non-potable water" label above a fixture means it is a non-drinking water source, such as sinks in classrooms, bathrooms, custodial closets and work areas, or a valved-off drinking source that previously tested above U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action levels. Non-potable water can be used for non-drinking and non-cooking purposes, such as washing your hands.

Where can I find more information about the PGCPS Water Quality Program?

For more information, visit www.pgcps.org/water-quality-program.

