

# Gower District #62

## Superintendent's Report

### Appendix B

**Date:** September 19, 2017

**Title:** Lead Testing in School Drinking Water (5 minutes)

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#### **Background:**

As a regular component of building and site management and maintenance, Gower staff complete a number of required testing and inspection protocols regulated by a variety of agencies including the Regional Office of Education, Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Transportation, and Local Emergency Agencies. Gower staff are responsible for incorporating any changes to existing regulations and must respond to any new laws and/or regulations to ensure that each of our school campuses remain safe and conducive to teaching and learning.

The Illinois Department of Public Health posted the following text to its website to help explain the new regulations that schools must follow regarding the testing for lead in potable (drinking) water:

*While great steps have been taken during the past two decades to reduce the levels of lead in water, lead may still get into water from older metal faucets, taps, or pipes. To protect Illinois children from possible exposure to lead in drinking water, Governor Bruce Rauner and the General Assembly passed Public Act 99-0922 requiring schools and daycares to sample for lead contamination in water.*

*The Act requires the oldest school buildings, those built before January 1, 1987, to complete water testing by the end of 2017. Schools built between January 2, 1987 and January 1, 2000 must complete testing by the end of 2018. The Act requires parents and guardians of students be notified of lead results greater than or equal to five parts per billion (ppb).*

*Daycares built on or before January 1, 2000 that serve children younger than 6 years old will also be required to conduct testing once rules are developed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and Illinois Department of Public Health.*

*Original web-content sourced on 9-11-17, V. Simon from <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/environmental-health-protection/lead-in-water>*

The entire text of Public Act 099-0922 can also be downloaded from the Illinois Department of Public Health website by using this [link](#), or directly from the Illinois General Assembly website by using this [link](#). The timeline for PA 099-0922 began with the First Reading in the IL Senate on 1-28-2015; eventually passed the Senate (48-5-0) on 5-31-2016; entered the IL House with the First Reading on 6-29-2016; passed the House (108-1-0) on 1-9-2017; received a number of amendments that passed both legislative houses (1-10-17); sent to the Governor (1-11-17); and approved by the Governor with an effective date of 1-17-17.

**Current State:** Gower staff took steps to begin local testing proactively. The following data was used to guide on-site testing at each of our school campuses:

School	Number of Potable (Drinking) Water Sources Tested	Number of Non-Potable Drinking Water Sources (Not-Tested/Not Required)
Gower West	19 Classroom Water Fountains/Bubblers 1 Teacher Lounge Sink 2 School Nurse Sinks 3 Hallway Water Fountain Stations (2 combined) 3 Kitchen Food Prep/Wash Sinks 1 Kitchen Hand-washing Sink	32 General Classroom Sinks 32 Bathroom Sinks 2 Custodial Wash Basins
Gower Middle	1 Teacher Lounge Sink 1 School Nurse Sink 3 Kitchen Food Prep/Wash Sinks 1 Kitchen Hand-washing Sink 5 Consumer Science Classroom Sinks 11 Hallway Water Fountain Stations (4 combined)	14 General Classroom Sinks 14 Bathroom Sinks 15 Science Lab Sinks 1 LRC Workroom Sink 2 Custodial Wash Basins

Gower staff collected 50 samples for potable water lead testing on 9-10-16. One (1) Hallway Water Fountain Station at GM was out-of-service at the time of testing. The samples were delivered to Suburban Laboratories, Inc., an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency-accredited laboratory, for analysis. Results were received by District officials on 9-15-16. The results indicated that of the fifty (50) samples analyzed, forty-six (46) indicated levels that were ‘not detected’ (< 5.00 ppb). One (1) sample at Gower Middle and three (3) samples at Gower West tested above the reporting threshold of 5 parts per billion. Those samples were located at:

- Gower Middle - Sample #2 - Kitchen Hand-washing Station, **5.81 ppb**
  - *Recommended Action - Replace fixture, retest*
- Gower West - Sample #7 - Kitchen Hand-washing Station, **21.0 ppb**
  - *Recommended Action - Replace fixture, retest*
- Gower West - Sample #17 - Room 35 (*A.T. Room Bubbler*), **6.72 ppb**
  - *Recommended Action - Replace fixture, retest*
- Gower West - Sample #20 - Room 46 (*Sp.Ed. Resource Room Bubbler*), **13.6 ppb**
  - *Recommended Action - Replace fixture, retest*

In response to initial testing, the impacted locations were immediately disconnected and taken out of service. District officials communicated action plan to affected staff and completed recommended action(s). Each of the four fixtures were replaced as a first-step in mitigating lead in water and scheduled for re-testing. District administrators awaited reporting requirements as the accompanying Public Act had passed the IL Senate and remained in the IL House. Shortly after the passage of the Public Act on 1-17-17, a ‘waiver process’ was established by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to prevent school districts from effectively ‘testing twice’ if certain requirements of testing were met, including such test results submitted to the IDPH within 120 days of enactment of this new law. Gower administrators filed for such waiver on 2-28-17 and continued with plans to retest the four (4) elevated areas as well as the single source of potable water that was out-of-service during the first period of testing (GM Water Fountain Station).

Gower staff collected 14 samples (1st and 2nd Draw) for seven (7) sources of potable water lead testing on 3-31-17. The samples were delivered to Suburban Laboratories, Inc., an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency-accredited laboratory, for analysis. Results were received by District officials on 4-11-17. The results were as follows:

- Gower Middle - Kitchen Hand-washing Station, 1st Draw, 2.79 ppb
- Gower Middle - Kitchen Hand-washing Station, 2nd Draw, None Detected (<2.00 ppb)
  - *Recommended Action - None. Continue regular use*
- Gower Middle - Hallway Water Fountain Station, 1st Draw, None Detected (<2.00 ppb)
- Gower Middle - Hallway Water Fountain Station, 2nd Draw, None Detected (<2.00 ppb)
  - *Recommended Action - None. Continue regular use*
- Gower West - Kitchen Hand-washing Station, 1st Draw, **9.39 ppb**
- Gower West - Kitchen Hand-washing Station, 2nd Draw, None Detected (<2.00 ppb)
  - *Recommended Action - Flush system for 30 seconds prior to use*
- Gower West - Kitchen Prep Station, 1st Draw, None Detected (<2.00 ppb)
- Gower West - Kitchen Prep Station, 2nd Draw, None Detected (<2.00 ppb)
  - *Recommended Action - None. Continue regular use*
- Gower West - Room 35 ('A.T. Room Bubbler'), 1st Draw, 4.64 ppb
- Gower West - Room 35 ('A.T. Room Bubbler'), 2nd Draw, 3.78 ppb
  - *Recommended Action - May continue regular use. Consider flushing system for 15-30 seconds prior to use*
- Gower West - Room 36 ('Board Room Bubbler'), 1st Draw, **8.79 ppb**
- Gower West - Room 36 ('Board Room Bubbler'), 2nd Draw, None Detected (<2.00 ppb)
  - *Recommended Action - Flush system for 30 seconds prior to use*
- Gower West - Room 46 ('Sp.Ed. Resource Room Bubbler'), 1st Draw, **16.8 ppb**
- Gower West - Room 46 ('Sp.Ed. Resource Room Bubbler'), 2nd Draw, None Detected (<2.00 ppb)
  - *Recommended Action - Flush system for 30 seconds prior to use*

District Administrators awaited the results of the waiver filed with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) through the end of the 2016-17 school year and requested a status update on 6-15-17. Additional information was requested from the district by the IDPH on 8-15-17 and subsequently submitted by district officials. The IDPH granted the district's request for waiver on 8-30-17. With such approval, district administrators received the information required to develop and implement an effective communication and mitigation plan.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency's website includes information about lead in drinking water and is shared [here](#) for your convenience:

Recommended practice is based on "The 3 T's"

- **Training** school officials to raise awareness of the potential occurrences, causes, and health effects of lead in drinking water.
- **Testing** drinking water in schools to identify potential problems and take corrective actions as necessary.
- **Telling** students, parents, staff, and the larger community about monitoring programs, potential risks, the results of testing, and remediation actions.

To download a copy of the full series of reports from Gower School District's Lead Testing in 2016-17, click [here](#).  
**Future State:**

The School District Website has been updated under the 'District Info' tab to include the results of our lead testing and to share information regarding mitigation. The district will monitor communications from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health regarding for recommendations regarding an ongoing testing/retesting schedule. The Superintendent of Schools recommends ongoing mitigation as detailed in this report (e.g. 30 second flushing of system before use in affected areas), retesting of all potable water sources within a 5-year period and incorporation of long-term plumbing (branch) replacement as part of master facility plan.

**Mitigation Strategies for Lead Found in School Drinking Water**

<http://dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/publications/school-lead-mitigation-strategies-050917.pdf>