



*Our students will lead and shape the future*

## News release

**May 12, 2016**

### **District launches water tests this month**

*Outside contractor will test all 26 schools and support sites in May*



At the school board meeting Tuesday, Superintendent Cohn announced the district's plans to test all schools and support service facilities in the district this month. The district will report the results and document any remediation steps that might be necessary based on the tests' findings.

"We have no reason to believe we have water quality concerns at our schools. And we know the best way to reassure

our families, students, staff and communities of schools' water quality is to run the tests, publish the results and document work done to respond to any test results at or over the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) limits.

Cohn noted the district will use "an outside, professional water quality testing service" to do the work. "This ensures testing does not interfere with the timely and very important work of our own maintenance staff who support school needs."

Testing will not interfere with regular school schedules as it will likely happen early in the morning and on weekends. According to water quality testing experts, such timing allows water to rest in the system. Water sitting for at least eight hours delivers the most valid test results – as opposed to water that has repeatedly churned through the system on weekdays.

Mike Gunn, the district's executive director of facilities and operations, provided background information about the school district's water sources. "Three different entities, each required to test water every three years, are the sources of water for our schools."

Gunn noted the [Silver Lake Water District](#), [Alderwood Water District](#) and [City of Everett](#) (which recently released a [report on its water safety](#)) oversee the district's communities' water quality at their sources.

"Homeowners and businesses have responsibility for water quality past the point of water district jurisdiction – the same is true for school districts. Water districts in the state of Washington are required by law to test water quality every three years. You can see each water district's water test timeline and reports on their websites."

Gunn explained that contaminants reportedly in some Tacoma schools water systems are likely from those old schools' plumbing. Lead pipes in those older schools were used mostly before the 1960s, according to the [Alderwood Water District](#) website.

Gunn recommended the The Alderwood website in particular as having “ ... some timely information about water quality, what happened in Flint, Michigan and why we have less reason to worry about water here in our region than Flint, Michigan does.”

Gunn also referred to a document on the [district's website](#) that lists dates for each district facility's construction and remodeling and documents the district's water testing history.

“Unlike Tacoma, we have no schools with *pre-1960s* plumbing which seem to be the main reason for concern in other districts.”

“News of the Flint, Michigan and then other district water quality questions have naturally caused people to turn their attention to local water sources. I especially thank our maintenance and facilities department for diligently responding to concerns caused by incidents outside of our district and for pulling together old records and resources in preparation for our upcoming water tests,” Cohn said.

**For more information:**

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