

# Ayer Shirley Regional School District

Office of The Superintendent



www.asrsd.org

July 5, 2016

To the Students, Families, and Staff of the Ayer Shirley Regional School District:

On June 14, 2016, a notification was sent to all staff and families indicating we were participating in a MassDEP - UMass Assistance Program for Lead and Copper in School Drinking Water that would test water at all four of our schools. This testing was to be completed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection/Drinking Water Department.

On June 15, 2016, water testing was completed at the high school. Please note water sampling will be conducted at Page Hilltop, Lura A. White, and the Middle School in the fall. During this recent sampling at the high school for lead and copper, results showed no detected levels of lead, but some water taps at the high school were found to have copper levels that exceed the Massachusetts and federal Action Level for copper in drinking water at schools and early education and child care facilities. The action level for copper in drinking water is 1.3 milligrams per liter (also known as parts per million). See sample results below.

Sampling Results		
Date Sample Collected	Location	Copper results in mg/L
6/15/16	Lower Commons	1.37
"	PE Alternatives	2.03
"	D Wing	1.85
"	Nurse's Exam Rm.	2.16

The administration takes these results very seriously and is moving immediately to safeguard the health of the students, faculty, and staff. It is important to be clear that lead was NOT found in the water samples.

To safeguard our students and other sensitive individuals (including women who are pregnant or nursing), the school district is working closely and cooperatively with MassDEP and Mark Wetzel, Superintendent of Public Works Department in Ayer.

It is not uncommon for new schools to have higher levels of copper in the pipe. This could be due to a number of issues; type of flux used in the pipe joints and copper particles left behind during construction. In addition, copper pipe tends to form an internal protective coating after a period of time (similar to a shiny penny turning green/brown).

We would like to inform you about our plans to reduce potential exposure to copper in drinking water at our school. Copper is not believed to be in the water source, but plumbing and fixtures in the building may contain copper, resulting in an increase in the copper content in tap water. Copper is a concern because a child's rapid development results in his/her body absorbing more copper than an adult does.

The following information describes steps and actions we are taking to address the issue of copper in the water:

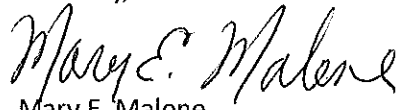
1. We have developed a sampling plan to conduct testing at outlets (faucets, water fountains, etc.) where students and staff get water for drinking, beverage preparation, and cooking.
2. We are implementing a flushing and water usage plan to safeguard against copper exposure from drinking water in the school at outlets that are found to be above the Action Level for copper. This includes the daily flushing of water fountains and/or faucets at sinks and the limitation of water consumption to cold-water faucets for food and beverage preparation.
3. We will undertake efforts to determine the cause of this copper Action Level exceedance and evaluate the adequacy of our existing water treatment corrosion control system. The Ayer Water Department continues to optimize the corrosion control treatment at the Town's two water treatment plants. We will develop and put into place a corrective action plan as quickly as possible following additional testing and consultation.
4. Through periodic reports, we will keep you informed as to the progress of our efforts. These reports will serve to let you know what has been done and what is being done to safeguard against copper exposure from drinking water at the high school.

***A Reminder:*** The water system at the school is not unlike water systems found in other buildings. Older plumbing systems and fixtures, especially, can contain lead pipes or solder that can allow lead to enter tap water. Plumbing systems also contain copper. If you have questions about lead or copper in your home's water supply, and are using a private well, you can have your water tested. If you are receiving water from a public water system (i.e., if you pay a water bill) you can call your local water department for information or check the Ayer 2015 Water Quality Report at <http://www.ayer.ma.us/ccr>.

If you have any questions on this information please contact Mr. Robert Briggs at 978-772-8600 Ext. 1683 or [bob.briggs@asrsd.org](mailto:bob.briggs@asrsd.org) or Mr. Mark Wetzel, P.E. at 978-772-8240 or [mwetzel@ayer.ma.us](mailto:mwetzel@ayer.ma.us)

I want to thank Mr. Briggs and Mr. Wetzel for their diligence and work in resolving this issue. The Public Works Department in Ayer led by Mr. Wetzel has been very supportive and has the safety of the citizens of Ayer as their priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary E. Malone". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Mary E. Malone

Superintendent of Schools