

**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### **CCSD voluntarily testing water infrastructure in schools**

Office of Strategy and  
Communications

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**CHARLESTON, SC** - Charleston County School District (CCSD) has taken the initiative to test all schools' drinking water for the possible presence of lead in internal plumbing systems as part of the district's commitment to providing a safe and healthy environment for all students.

"Even though South Carolina schools are not required to test drinking water for lead content, it is recommended by federal and state regulators, and by water utility professionals," explained Ron Kramps, CCSD Associate of Facilities Management. "It is clearly in the best interests of our students and staff that we take the extra step for their health and safety. We have and will continue to respond immediately with corrective action, which may involve replacing older fixtures, adding filters where necessary, or flushing programs."

The testing program was developed to meet the state's established drinking water standards, with consultation from the local municipal water systems and published guidance provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the American Water Works Association (AWWA).

Through the first few months of the program, more than 98 percent of the outlets tested have had results come back with less than 15 parts per billion of lead, which is the recommended threshold for action by the EPA. In fact, a majority of the outlets of tested initially (72 percent) have had readings of less than 1 part per billion or "non-detect."

"State and federal law doesn't mandate water testing in schools. I commend the Charleston County School District for its proactive approach of testing school water," said J. Routt Reigart, M.D., MUSC professor emeritus of pediatrics. Reigart has nearly 50 years of experience investigating and treating lead exposure in children. "They are wisely mitigating even the low-risk lead levels they are finding to make sure that the children, teachers and families at those schools can feel secure in knowing that their children are being protected from even low-level exposure to lead in their school's water. I applaud the CCSD's proactive and transparent approach on this issue."

The district started testing drinking water for lead with the goal of having testing completed in all schools by the end of February. The order of schools for sampling was determined based on evaluation criteria suggested by the EPA and the AWWA. Water outlets (faucets, water fountains, sinks, etc.) typically used or known to be used for drinking or cooking will be tested.

"We applaud CCSD for determining if the plumbing and water fixtures in their schools contain lead, and for expediting corrective action to protect students and staff," said Kin Hill, CEO at Charleston Water System. "Every dollar spent to remove lead from premise plumbing is very well spent."

"CCSD is ahead of the curve with its testing program," said Clay Duffie, Mount Pleasant Waterworks General Manager. "As the District continues to test its facilities' infrastructure for lead, our team stands ready to share its expertise in corrosion control and support their team."

Parents will receive a letter after their child's school is tested explaining the results and any corrective action that was or will be needed. The District has also prepared a list of Frequently Asked Questions and detailed results from the drinking water testing for each school (as they become available) on the [CCSD Facilities Management webpage](#).

The Office of Facilities Management also started a "Flush Mondays" initiative in district schools last month. Staff members in every CCSD school or facility, that has at least one water tap in their classroom, workroom, locker room, cafeteria or any other space, have been asked to turn on and "flush" each tap for about one minute when they arrive on Monday morning.

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.