



ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL

News Release

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**Atlanta Public Schools completes lead water testing following resolution introduced by Councilmember Keisha Lance Bottoms**

*Test results to be presented to the Atlanta City Council's City Utilities Committee on Tuesday*

**ATLANTA** – On October 5 Atlanta Public Schools announced the completion of a district wide voluntary water testing initiative at all district facilities including school buildings.

The testing was done in partnership with the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management. In April, City Councilmember Keisha Lance Bottoms introduced a resolution calling for the City to work with APS to ensure that the water supplied to schools met the United States Environmental Protection Agency's standards for lead levels.

The Department of Watershed Management will present the testing results to the Atlanta City Council's City Utilities Committee on Tuesday, October 11. The meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. in Committee Room No. 1.

"I introduced the resolution out of concern for the water supply for our children," said Councilmember Bottoms. "I am hopeful that independent schools and day care centers across the city will also join in this collaboration and work with our Department of Watershed Management to ensure that our children will have the best and highest quality drinking water from the time it leaves our treatment plants to the time it is consumed."

This year water systems across the country have been under scrutiny after officials in Flint, Mich. found that corrosive Flint River water used by Flint's water system caused lead from aging pipes to leach into the water supply systems, effecting thousands of residents.

The City of Newark, N.J. discontinued the use of water fountains in thirty (30) of its public schools after high levels of lead in the drinking water was tested by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Even small levels of lead found in the blood of children have been shown to affect IQ, ability to pay attention, and academic achievement. Greater levels of lead exposure can lead to delayed growth, hearing loss, and serious neurological complications.

In a letter to parents APS Superintendent Meria Carstarphen said water sources tested for lead in district schools have met the standard of being below EPA's action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb) for public water systems.

Schools pose special challenges for lead as the water at schools goes through long periods of not being used, including during nights, weekends, holidays, and through the summer.

As a precaution Dr. Carstarphen stated that the district is establishing protocols and procedures for addressing the buildup of lead in the water systems of all APS facilities. This includes:

- Closely following EPA-recommended guidelines for flushing all water sources in all school facilities that have been unoccupied by students and staff longer than 7 days.
- Development of a regular testing schedule, whereby water courses in district facilities are tested on an ongoing basis.
- Continue working with the City of Atlanta on any water testing initiatives.

"I commend the Atlanta Public Schools for taking this proactive step to reassure parents and caregivers that the water in our schools is clean and safe," said Councilmember Bottoms.

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