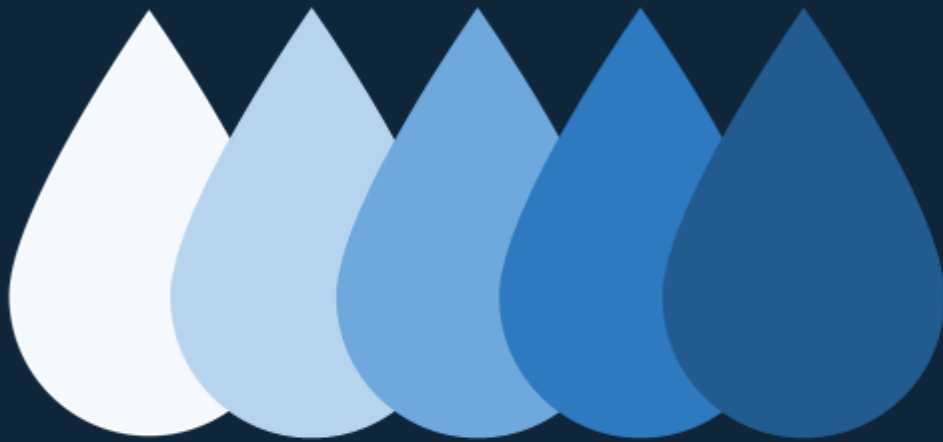


# The State of Lead Water in Schools in New Jersey's Fifth Congressional District



KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE

OCTOBER 5, 2019



**JOSH GOTTHEIMER**  
New Jersey's 5th District

# **INTRODUCTION**

Every child deserves access to clean, lead-free drinking water at home and at school, and every parent deserves to know if their child's school has lead in their pipes, sinks, and water fountains. Unfortunately, many schools throughout Northern New Jersey have pipes that predate the conversion to a lead-free system in the 1980s. This means that all-too-many schools have elevated levels of lead in water fountains, faucets, and cafeterias, putting our children at risk of serious health issues.

The science is clear. Lead exposure can stunt a child's development, can cause learning disabilities and appetite loss, and can even lead to permanent damage to their vital organs and nervous systems. Kids who are exposed to lead water often experience hearing loss, seizures, and irreversible harm to brain development. We cannot afford to take these risks with our kids; the stakes are simply too high.

New Jersey law *N.J.A.C. 6A:26-12.4(g)* requires that all schools test for lead at least every six years, and that schools make all test results available at the school facility and on the school district's website. I believe it is essential that parents, teachers, and administrators have all of the information at their fingertips about lead levels in their schools, so they are well-informed about potential health issues their children may face, and schools can take necessary measures.

As I've noted repeatedly over the last few years, whether intentional or not, many schools in my District and in our state are not meeting the obligations of the law. It is essential that all schools test, report, and share testing information in a clear and easily-accessible manner with parents and the community. Among schools that are reporting their lead testing results, many have posted lead levels above 15 parts per billion (ppb), the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) maximum standard for remediation according to the Lead and Copper Rule of 1991. It is unclear, given the current reporting requirements, whether these schools have addressed these higher lead levels. I am sure that many have indeed addressed elevated levels, but there is no current requirement for schools to post that information or update their websites within a timely manner.

This report analyzes every school district in New Jersey's Fifth Congressional District for their compliance with New Jersey's lead water reporting law, as well as their most recent reported levels of lead in drinking water, if available. Not every district's information is easy to find, which in itself is an issue that needs fixing, but we did our best to locate it on their websites.

As outlined in my federal legislation, the Lead Free Schools Act, I have called for more frequent testing and annual posting of lead water test results for all schools. I also believe that all states, including New Jersey, should have a central database where all parents can get regular, easily accessible test results for their individual school.

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report's findings are a result of an assessment of the websites of all 85 school districts throughout New Jersey's Fifth Congressional District: 49 school districts in Bergen County, 19 in Sussex County, 14 in Warren County, and 3 in Passaic County. Again, this reporting is based on our ability to easily search and find -- or not find -- the information.

Of the 85 school districts, according to our search, 19 percent did not report the results of lead testing on their district website.

Of the 81 percent of school districts that posted lead testing results, according to our search, 46 districts indicated at least one outlet within their system that had a problem with lead in their water.

Water testing results were more accessible on some district websites than others. Of the 69 school districts that posted test results, according to our search, only 28 schools linked to the test results directly from the website's home page.

Of the 41 school districts that had less accessible tests, according to our search, lead was detected above the EPA standard in 26 districts, compared with 20 out of the 28 school districts that linked the tests directly to the home page.

These findings demonstrate the failure of several school districts to comply with New Jersey State Board of Education stipulations that "every district must make all test results available at the school facility and on the district's website."

# **CONCLUSION**

As the data clearly shows, there is much work to be done to bring all our schools into compliance with state law and to protect our kids from dangerous lead water.

As the Representative for New Jersey's Fifth Congressional District, I am deeply committed to ensuring access to clean and safe water for all residents, especially our children.

1. If they have not already done so, based on feedback I have received from many concerned parents, I believe it is critical that all school districts conduct lead tests in their schools as soon as possible.
2. School districts should also make all test results widely available in an easy-to-find place on school district websites, in plain speak, so that all New Jersey parents have access to this critical information.
3. I would encourage New Jersey to create a central database that schools report into annually with easy-to-access results.
4. Lastly, I would encourage the State of New Jersey to strictly enforce the law that is on the books. As this report shows, without full enforcement, lead water disclosure laws will not have the intended and necessary effect.
5. Schools should also be required to test their water for lead, and disclose findings, more than the current requirement once every six years.

During the 115th Congress, I introduced the Lead-Free Schools Act, bipartisan legislation to require schools test and improve their drinking water infrastructure and ensure parents and communities have knowledge on the status of water in their child's schools. I am proud that several aspects of my bill were already enacted into law, including the provision to establish a competitive grant pilot program for drinking water fountain replacement in schools.

I will be reintroducing this critical legislation in the coming weeks to bring home resources for lead water remediation, and to eliminate dangerous lead and copper in our water sources.

Safe drinking water is not a partisan issue, it is an American issue; which is why I will continue to work with anyone to end the scourge of lead water once and for all.

# RESULTS

*Districts that post lead tests*

*Districts that post lead tests without remediation plan*

*Districts that do not post lead tests*

County	Town	Lead Water Testing on Website?	Lead Test Results	Date of Last Test
Bergen	Allendale	Yes	Hillside: 14.9 ppb; Brookside: 15 ppb	6/14/2017
Bergen	Alpine	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	Bergenfield	Yes	Several fountains tested above 15 ppb, some as high as 100 ppb. Those fountains have been turned off.	12/8/2016
Bergen	Bogota	Yes, under "Board Office Resources" page.	Four samples were shown above 15 ppb. Those Faucets were turned off.	5/8/2017
Bergen	Closter	Yes, under "Public Notices" tab.	1 sample tested at 19.5 ppb at Tenakill Middle School. A sign was posted saying "Do not drink, handwashing only".	6/27/2017
Bergen	Demarest	Yes, under "documents" section.	2019 Demarest Middle School: 3.44 ppb; 2016 District wide testing: 4.88 ppb	2019 Demarest Middle School; 2016 District wide
Bergen	Dumont	Yes, under "more important links".	All results were "non-detectable levels of lead"	8/17/2016
Bergen	Emerson	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	Fair Lawn	Yes-under the header "District Information".	Fair Lawn HS had a high of 21 ppb, the test was done in 2016. In 2017, Forrest School, Thomas Edison School, Lyncrest School, Memorial School, Radburn School, and Warren Point School all remediated lead issues. A second testing showed no detection of lead water for all tests.	5/27/2017
Bergen	Franklin Lakes	Yes	2 out of 71 water tests indicated levels above 15	6/2017

County	Town	Lead Water Testing on Website?	Lead Test Results	Date of Last Test
			ppb. Both of those sites have been shut down.	
Bergen	Glen Rock	Yes, after searching for "lead water".	Several results throughout the district above 15 ppb.	4/26/2019
Bergen	Hackensack	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	Harrington Park	Yes, under "announcements" section.	10.1 ppb	6/27/2017
Bergen	Haworth	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	Hillsdale	Yes	Ann Blanche Smith School remediated lead issues in the sink that tested above 15 ppb, and after retesting, the area is "under 15 ppb." A location at George White Middle School that tested above 15 ppb is permanently disconnected.	6/25/2019
Bergen	Ho-Ho-Kus	Yes-under "parent tab."	All samples tested under 15 ppb.	7/13/2016
Bergen	Lodi	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	Mahwah	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	Maywood	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	Midland Park	Yes	A sink in the Godwin school was at 16 ppb. Remediation steps were taken and the retest showed a lead sample at was at 14.3 ppb.	6/5/2017
Bergen	Montvale	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	New Milford	Yes	All samples tested under 15 ppb.	6/3/2017
Bergen	Northvale	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	Norwood	Yes	3 locations in Norwood School District were above 15 ppb. After testing, fixtures were removed.	7/13/2019
Bergen	Oakland	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results, link on the homepage	Valley Middle School was tested twice, and still has above 15 ppb in at least	6/2017-8/2017

County	Town	Lead Water Testing on Website?	Lead Test Results	Date of Last Test
		states a letter was sent out.	one location. Heights Elementary was under 15 ppb, at 14.9. Dogwood Hill Elementary tested twice, and is above 15 ppb in some locations. Manito Elementary had 4 samples tested, two of which were at or above 15 ppb. No letter on remediation plan for this school was posted.	
Bergen	Old Tappan	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	Oradell	Yes-had to search for lead water.	A sink tested at 16.8 ppb. The fixture was taken out of service.	4/26/2017
Bergen	Paramus	Yes-under "parent resources" section.	Out of 110 samples, 25 were above the acceptable level. Those locations have been turned off and some have been taken out/replaced.	5/5/2016
Bergen	Park Ridge	Yes-under the "building and grounds" tab.	Out of 93 samples, 1 was above the acceptable level. This fixture was taken out of service and a sign was posted with a restrictive cover.	10/16/2017
Bergen	Ramsey	Yes-under the "building and grounds" tabs.	Out of 41 samples, one was above the acceptable level. A "handwash only" sign was placed on the fixture.	2017
Bergen	Ridgewood	Yes- under the "business office" tab.	GWMS- out of 27 samples, 1 fountain was found at 43.8 ppb. The fountain was disconnected. Willard School-out of 25 samples, one sample was found at 25 ppb. The sink was turned off and bottled water was supplied.	4/18/2017
Bergen	River Edge	Yes	All samples tested under 15 ppb.	3/16/2017

County	Town	Lead Water Testing on Website?	Lead Test Results	Date of Last Test
Bergen	River Vale	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	All samples tested under 15 ppb.	12/27/2018
Bergen	Rochelle Park	Yes	One sample of 16 tested above 15 ppb.	6/20/2017
Bergen	Saddle River	Yes, under admin tab.	Out of the 21 samples, seven were above the acceptable level.	3/10/2017
Bergen	Teaneck (Share with CD-9)	Yes, under "District Reports" tab.	All samples tested under 15 ppb.	2017
Bergen	Upper Saddle River	Yes	All samples tested under 15 ppb.	2/21/17
Bergen	Waldwick	Yes, under district information tab.	High School had 2 samples above 15 ppb. Middle School had 1 sample above 15 ppb. J.A. Traphagen Elementary School had 2 samples above 15 ppb. Crescent Elementary School has no samples over 15 ppb.	4/25/17
Bergen	Woodcliff Lake	X	N/A	N/A
Bergen	Wyckoff	Yes, under "Administration" tab	All samples tested under 15 ppb.	1/9/17
Bergen	Northern Highlands (Allendale, Ho Ho Kus, Saddle River)	Yes	All samples tested under 15 ppb.	2/24/2017
Bergen	Westwood Regional (Westwood and Washington Township)	Yes	15 out of 126 tested above 15 ppb. Contaminated water sources taken out of service.	8/17/2017
Bergen	River Dell (Oradell and River Edge)	Yes	4 of 323 samples tested above 15 ppb at River Dell Middle School, and 1 of 23 tested above 15 ppb at River Dell High School. Contaminated water sources have been remediated.	1/21/19
Bergen	Northern Valley at Demarest (Closter, Demarest, Haworth)	Yes	1 of 4 samples tested above 15 ppb.	8/22/17
Bergen	Northern Valley at Old Tappan (Old Tappan, Harrington)	Yes	1 of 4 samples tested above 15 ppb.	8/22/17



County	Town	Lead Water Testing on Website?	Lead Test Results	Date of Last Test
	Park, Northvale, Norwood)			
Bergen	Tenaflly HS (Alpine)	Yes	2 of 80 samples taken resulted in levels higher than 125 ppb, these locations were disconnected and replaced.	5/13/19
Bergen	Ramapo (Franklin Lakes, Oakland, Wyckoff)	Yes	1 sample was found to be over 15 ppb. All sources had their water turned off pending review and correction of condition. Fixture posted "Out of Service".	5/30/2017
Bergen	Indian Hills (Oakland, Franklin Lakes, Wyckoff)	Yes	14 samples were found to be above 15 ppb. All of those sources were turned off pending review and correction of condition. Fixture posted "Out of Service".	5/30/17
Bergen	BC Technical	X	N/A	N/A
Passaic	Ringwood	X	N/A	N/A
Passaic	West Milford	Yes	6 out of the 20 samples tested above 15 ppb. All 6 of those sources have been disconnected and replaced.	9/15/17
Passaic	Lakeland (Ringwood)	Yes	Of 56 samples taken, 17 samples tested above the 15 ppb, all of these sources have been disconnected and replaced, as well as retested.	4/21/17
Sussex	Andover (Borough/Township)	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	1 out of the 23 samples tested above 15 ppb. That source was disconnected and will only be reconnected after further testing.	3/24/2017
Sussex	Frankford Township (Includes Branchville, Augusta)	Yes, under our district/policies tab.	All samples tested under 15 ppb.	11/1/2016
Sussex	Franklin Borough	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	5 out of 42 samples tested above 15 ppb in	2/25/17 and 11/1/17

County	Town	Lead Water Testing on Website?	Lead Test Results	Date of Last Test
			Feb 2017. Those 5 sources were retested in September 2017 and were found to be below 15 ppb and deemed safe to use.	
Sussex	Fredon Township	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	11 of 70 samples tested above 15 ppb. All 11 sources have been disconnected.	11/15/17
Sussex	Green Township	Yes, Under Buildings and Grounds Services.	37 samples taken; 22 had no lead, 10 had 5ppb, and 3 exceed 15ppb.	7/7/17
Sussex	Hamburg	Yes	11 of 41 samples tested above 15 ppb.	3/17/2017
Sussex	Hampton Township	Yes, need to go to individual schools' websites to get results.	Both schools had all samples tested under 15 ppb.	2017
Sussex	Hardyston	Yes	All samples tested below 15 ppb.	4/27/2017
Sussex	Lafayette Township	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	9 of the 82 samples tested above 15 ppb.	4/4/17
Sussex	Montague Township	Yes	All samples tested below 15 ppb.	4/27/17
Sussex	Newton	Yes, under "Superintendents" tab.	All samples tested below 15 ppb.	4/21/2017
Sussex	Sandyston Township (includes Walpack)	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	Not printed in plain English, difficult to understand.	4/11/16
Sussex	Stillwater	Yes	Not printed in plain English, difficult to understand.	6/2017
Sussex	Sussex Borough (Includes Wantage and Beemerville and Colesville and Libertyville)	Yes, Under Buildings and Grounds Services.	3 of 58 samples tested above 15 ppb. All of those sources have been disconnected.	6/8/2019
Sussex	Vernon Township (Includes Highland lake)	Yes	Lounsberry Hollow School and Walnut Ridge had 7 samples above 15 ppb. All samples above were either disconnected or had new filters installed. Glen Meadow had 3 samples above 15 ppb. All had new filters installed. Vernon	12/31/18

County	Town	Lead Water Testing on Website?	Lead Test Results	Date of Last Test
			Township high school had 3 samples above 15 ppb. All were either replaced or got new filters.	
Sussex	High Point	Yes under Parents Community Tab.	3 of 56 samples tested above 15 ppb. All of these sources have been disconnected and replaced.	
Sussex	Sussex-Wantage	Yes, Under Buildings and Grounds Services.	3 of 58 samples tested above 15 ppb. All of those sources have been disconnected.	6/8/2019
Sussex	Kittatinny Regional	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	All samples tested below 15 ppb.	8/20/2019
Sussex	Walkkill Valley	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	60 of 194 samples tested above 15 ppb. All of these sources were either disconnected or had a do not drink sign posted on them.	5/24/2017
Warren	Allamuchy Township	X	N/A	N/A
Warren	Belvidere	Yes, Under Buildings and Grounds. Difficult to download.	49 samples tested, one showed above 15 ppb.	7/2017
Warren	Frelinghuysen Township	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results, then look at township board meeting for the results.	The results of lead water monitoring did not exceed the action level.	9/7/16
Warren	Hackettstown (Includes Beattystown)	X	N/A	N/A
Warren	Hope Township	Yes, under quick links.	All samples tested below 15 ppb.	6/1/17
Warren	-Great Meadows (Includes Independence Township and Liberty Township)	Yes, under "Business Office' tab.	All tests below 15 ppb.	2018
Warren	Knowlton Township (Includes Columbia)	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	3 out of 11 samples tested above 15 ppb. All 3 of these sources has been turned off and removed.	5/8/2017

County	Town	Lead Water Testing on Website?	Lead Test Results	Date of Last Test
Warren	Mansfield Township (Includes Port Murray)	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	John Hydock Elementary School had 6 of 24 samples come back above 15 ppb. All Sources were removed. Manfield Elementary School had 1 sample that was above 15 ppb. It has a sign that says safe for handwashing, DO NOT DRINK.	7/21/2016
Warren	Oxford Township	Yes	All samples tested below 15 ppb.	5/31/17
Warren	Washington Borough	Yes, under news.	1 of 34 samples tested above 15 ppb. That source has been removed.	6/1/2017
Warren	Washington Township	Yes.	2 samples tested above 15 ppb. Both fixtures were disconnected and replaced.	3/22/2017
Warren	White Township	Yes	1 of 23 samples tested above 15 ppb. That source has been removed.	6/5/17
Warren	North Warren Regional	X	N/A	N/A
Warren	Warren Hills Regional	Yes, but need to search 'lead water' for results.	1 of the 54 samples tested at 41.6 ppb in the High School. All tests done in the middle school were below 15 ppb.	12/2016