

March 24, 2016

Office of the Chancellor

**52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007**

212 374 0200 Tel

212 374 5588 Fax

Dear Families and Staff,

Recent events nationally and regionally have raised awareness, concern and questions about lead levels in drinking water. We want to assure you that New York City's water is extraordinarily safe.

There are a number of proactive, ongoing measures the New York City Department of Education (DOE) and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) take to ensure that the water in New York City schools is safe for students and staff both in DOE district schools and in partnership with independent educational providers like yours.

New York City has excellent water quality.

New York City's water is of the highest quality, meeting or exceeding all federal and State standards. The City regulates its own watershed that surrounds — and protects — our reservoirs, and the water is tested over 500,000 times each year at various points throughout the system. Beyond these extensive measures, the DOE works with City agencies, including the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), to ensure our students have access to safe drinking water in schools.

DEP has invested more than \$10 billion over the last decade to maintain and improve our water supply infrastructure. Between 2008 and 2010, DEP worked with DOE and other city agencies to identify and remove lead service lines to schools and other municipal buildings.

For those buildings that have even one outlet with results above recommended levels, DOHMH directs educational and Child Care sites to institute a flushing protocol based on EPA guidance, involving a combination of weekly flushing, equipment replacement and more, to ensure the safety of students and faculty. Flushing has been shown to be highly effective in removing lead from water because (a) flushing builds up the protective coating on plumbing pipes and (b) flushing moves old water out of the system and brings in fresh water.

In partnership with DOHMH, DOE will be working in the coming days and weeks to offer to test water at all schools and programs governed by Article 43 of New York City Health Code. Your child's pre-K site falls under the governance of Article 43. The results of those tests will be shared with the public as soon as they are available.

As of March 23rd, you can visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/watersafety.htm> to find a searchable database that will provide families with direct access to information about the water testing results for each school. As soon as test results for your child's program are available, you will find them listed at this website. In the meantime, you can call 311 for general information about lead and water safety.

While there is no cause for concern about the water in New York City, we understand that you take your child's safety seriously. We share that commitment to safety with you.

Sincerely,

Carmen Fariña



Chancellor
Department of Education

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH



Commissioner
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene