

NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**BUSINESS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING**

INFORMATION SHEET

DATE: June 14, 2023
TO: Business Committee
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer
Pete Sabo, Executive Director Planning & Operations
Brian Hackwood, Assistant Director Planning & Operations
SUBJECT: Lead in Water Update

Background:

On February 24, 2016, the Ministry of Education directed all school districts in British Columbia to begin a program of testing for lead content in all facilities built prior to 1990 to be completed over three years. Following Board direction, testing and remediation of all school facilities in SD68 built prior to 1990 was fully completed by June 30, 2018. This was completed a year ahead of schedule.

In March 2019, Health Canada revised the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality Lead levels from 0.010 to 0.005 mg/l. Due to this revision, the Ministry of Education along with Island Health required re-testing of remediated facilities to ensure compliance to new standards and testing of all remaining facilities built after 1990. Renewed testing began taking place from June 2019 and all facilities were completed by March 31, 2023.

Discussion:

The District's approach to Lead in Water Remediation, in cooperation with Island Health, is as follows:

- Posted signage at all water sources advising users to run the water for two minutes
- An Environmental Consultant was retained to complete testing of all SD68 facilities and to recommend remediation options
- A Mechanical Consultant was retained to design and inspect the remediation works
- Remediation works were a combination of flush stations, faucet replacements and drinking fountain replacements to self-flushing bottle filling stations

- The remediation works included the replumbing of all domestic water supply lines at two elementary schools, namely Cedar Elementary and Cilaire
- Flushing was chosen over filtration for 2 reasons:
 1. The high cost of filter replacement
 2. The disposal of filters containing high levels of lead into landfills
- As a result of this program, every NLPS school now contains at least 1 refrigerated fountain/water bottle filling station

Annual Facility Grant (AFG) funds were used each year for the testing and remediation works. Approximately \$250,000 was allocated for each of the last 3 years to complete the remediation works to the new standards, for a total of more than \$1,000,000 over the last 6 years.

As of March 31, 2023, the remediation works have been completed and the Facilities Department is now turning to the process of compliance and maintenance.

- \$10,000 has been added (at the end of the first 3 years of the program) to the Maintenance budget to ensure the operation of flush valves and to test one-third of the critical drinking water fixtures each year
- Water quality reports are forwarded to Island Health to determine if remediation works are successful
- Testing will take place to reduce the flushing times where possible – in turn reducing the amount of water required for flushing.
- Based on results, signage requiring faucets to be run prior to consumption may be removed

instruction and
assessment

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Truth and
Reconciliation

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environmental
stewardship and
sustainability