TOMPKINS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Your Partner for a Healthy Community

Attachment 4

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February 19, 2016

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

We recognize there are concerns about lead in the drinking water in our schools and offer the following information on lead, lead in drinking water and how it affects the health of your child.

A few facts about lead:

- Lead can be found in lead-based paint, air, soil, household dust, food, certain types of pottery, porcelain and pewter as well as jewelry, toys and folk medicines. Most lead exposures occur from lead based paint.
- Lead seldom occurs naturally in the source for water supplies like rivers, lakes and ground water.
- Lead enters drinking water as a result of corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and plumbing.
- Lead is not absorbed through the skin during activities like hand washing, bathing or showering.
- Low levels of lead in drinking water is common. United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and NYS Department of Health set safe drinking water standards.

What are the health effects of lead?
The health effects of lead depend on the total exposure to lead sources over time and an individual's health status. Elevated blood lead levels in children can result in behavior and learning problems, lower IQ, hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems and anemia.

What about lead testing for my child?
If you have concerns about lead exposure in your child, consult your child's primary care provider. A "fingerstick" blood test can be done at most primary care provider offices. The test results are known within several minutes. Other primary care providers may refer you to a testing lab.

What if my child does not have a primary care provider?
The Health Department can help you find a primary care provider as well as assist with obtaining blood lead testing for your child. Call the Health Department at 274-6616.

Have there been any elevated blood lead levels in children who attend either Caroline or Enfield Elementary Schools?
In the last two weeks, of the approximately 35 children tested, no measurable blood lead levels have been detected.

For additional lead information, you can access the websites below or call the **Tompkins County Health Department** at **274-6616**.

www.epa.gov www.tompkinscountyny.gov/health

Frank Kruppa
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