



## State of New Jersey

MARIE H. KATZENBACH SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF  
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MELINDO PERSI  
*Interim Superintendent*

Date: August 1, 2023  
To: Katzenbach Parents and Guardians  
From: Melindo Persi, Interim Superintendent  
RE: Public Notification for Lead in Drinking Water

Given national concerns over lead found in water, the Katzenbach School hired an environmental testing laboratory to check the lead levels on campus. The Safe Drinking Water Act passed by Congress in 1986 requires notification to all consumers about possible lead contamination in drinking water.

Random samples were recently tested in areas where water is consumed (drinking fountains, kitchen sinks) and preliminary results indicate that five of these show elevated levels in some locations within the buildings. While the school has provided bottled water across campus for several years we felt it was important to test various locations as part of our process of continuously monitoring water quality. The locations that have elevated levels have been disconnected from the school's water supply. We will provide bottled water to the areas with elevated levels and continue to test and re-test all areas to ensure that they are below EPA/DEP levels.

The enclosed FAQ sheet is intended to answer the most commonly asked questions. We are working with the environmental testing laboratory to conduct more extensive testing and will continue to provide bottled water across campus as needed.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets drinking water standards and has determined that lead is a health concern at certain levels of exposure. We remain committed to ensuring that the health and safety of students and staff is a priority and we will continue to provide updates as we have more information. If you have any questions about the drinking water at the Katzenbach School or testing information, please call Allwyn Baskin, Director of Administrative Services and Facilities, at 609-530-3104.

A fact sheet on lead in drinking water is available from the New Jersey Department of Health at [http://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/dw\\_lead\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/dw_lead_factsheet.pdf). For more information on lead in water, please visit: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/pdf/lead-water-faq.pdf>.

# Katzenbach Water Testing FAQs

1. Why did the school conduct the initial tests?

- The Katzenbach School tests water for evidence of lead in drinking water throughout the campus each year.

2. What were the results of the testing?

- The majority of the tests conducted indicated satisfactory results. Results received recently from our water testing indicates that five of the sample areas, which include sinks and fountains, have elevated levels. These were found in isolated locations in each building.

3. Which of the buildings are affected?

In buildings that the school currently occupies, the following showed elevated levels:

- Jochem Center (1 location)
- Academic Center High School (4 locations)
- Building 3 (1 location)
- Clock Tower (1 location)
- Residential Building #1 (1 location)

4. Are the entire buildings affected?

- No. Samples were taken from various locations specific buildings so it is currently inconclusive, but unlikely, that entire buildings are affected. Additional testing is being scheduled for the remaining areas.

5. How are the students and staff getting water?

- For several years, the school has been providing bottled water throughout campus. In addition, the school has installed filtered bottle filling stations as a source of drinking water. All students and staff should only drink the bottled water provided by the school or use the bottle filling stations.

6. What about the other locations?

- We are working with the testing laboratory to re-test the initial areas. We will update the community through FAQs as we receive additional information and results.

7. What about the kitchens?

- Some sinks tested positive; not all sinks in the kitchen have been identified with elevated levels of lead. Those that have been identified have been closed.
- The majority of our food does not come into contact with water. Many items are frozen and delivered to the kitchens for defrosting and serving. Precautions will be taken to ensure fresh food will be prepared using unaffected water.

8. What about the water fountains?

- All of the traditional drinking fountains (aka "bubblers") at Katzenbach have been disabled for quite some time. As outlined earlier, the school has installed filtered bottle filling stations to replace these as a source of drinking water. In addition, bottled water continues to be available where fountains have been closed.

9. What steps are being taken to remedy the situation?

- First, the school has disabled the areas that tested positive for lead. We shut off the water, or covered areas to prevent use of faucets.
- Second, we are narrowing down the source of contamination. We anticipate having to change fixtures and pipes.
- Third, we will re-test and remediate until levels are deemed acceptable according to EPA/DEP standards.