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File ID Number	23-2846
Introduction Date	08-21-2025
Enactment Number	
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# **Board Cover Memorandum**

**To** Facilities Committee

**From** Denise Saddler, Ed. D., Interim Superintendent

Preston Thomas, Chief Systems & Services Officer

Pranita Ranbhise, Executive Director, Facilities Planning & Management

Meeting Date August 21, 2025

Subject Deferred Maintenance Program, with respect to Water Quality and Drinking

Water - Progress Updates

Ask of the Committee This item provides an update for discussion. No action is needed at this time.

**Background** 

The Board of Education has prioritized the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors by ensuring access to safe, high-quality drinking water across all District facilities. In alignment with state and federal requirements on lead in school drinking water, and consistent with Board Policy BP 3511.3, the District has implemented a comprehensive water quality program.

Discussion

Staff is presenting an update on the District's water quality initiatives, including the policy context, key milestones achieved, and the strategies in place to ensure long-term water safety. This presentation will provide an overview of system infrastructure, dedicated staff roles, and the comprehensive set of measures deployed to meet our water quality goals.

The session will focus on:

- Policy Milestones Review of national and California regulations and timelines addressing lead in school drinking water, including how these requirements have shaped the District's facilities.
- Systems and Staffing Overview Description of District-wide water infrastructure, monitoring systems, and dedicated staff responsible for program implementation.

**Strategies** – Summary of the multi-pronged approach, including filtered water station installations, comprehensive water testing, fixture replacements, enhanced signage, kitchen system upgrades, and expanded communication systems.

 Project Milestones – Progress to date, including site installations, fixture upgrades, and outreach activities, as well as key upcoming targets.

Staff will also share next steps for expanding testing, completing priority installations, and continuing stakeholder engagement to sustain high water quality standards.

**Fiscal Impact** 

Bond Measures J and Y; Kitchen Infrastructure, and Training Funds (Total of \$20.5 Million).

Attachment(s)

Presentation: Progress Updates - Deferred Maintenance Program, with respect to Water Quality and Drinking Water.

# **Water Quality Update**

**OUSD Board of Education, August 2025** 

Presentation By: Preston Thomas, OUSD Chief of Systems & Services



OAKLAND UNIFIED **SCHOOL DISTRICT** 

Community Schools, Thriving Students

# **Our Vision**

All OUSD students will find joy in their academic experience while graduating with the skills to ensure they are caring, competent, fully-informed, critical thinkers who are prepared for college, career, and community success.

# **Our Mission**

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) will build a Full Service Community District focused on high academic achievement while serving the whole child, eliminating inequity, and providing each child with excellent teachers, every day.









# **Agenda**

- Water Quality Overview
- **Key Milestones**
- **Our Strategies**
- **Looking Ahead**









# Water Quality and Lead Issues are not Unique to OUSD

SCHOOL & DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

Many Schools Have Lead in Their Drinking Water. What the Feds Are Doing EDUCATION EQUITY

OUSD lead crisis: Internal records reveal panic and confusion among school leaders

# Trump's Plan to Make America Healthy Again? Continued Exposure to Lead in Water.

No one knows how many lead pipes funnel tainted water into schools and daycares, but the GOP is derailing remediation.

By Eleanor J. Bader, TRUTHOUT February 18, 2025

Elevated lead levels found in 13 more sinks at DODEA elementary school in Germany

By MATTHEW M. BURKE STARS AND STRIPES • May 15, 2025

# Milwaukee's Lead Crisis: Flaky Paint, Closed Schools and a C.D.C. in Retreat

Some children were exposed to lead and investigators found flaking paint inside aging schools. Two federal experts, expected to help guide the response, have lost their jobs.

# Dangerous Levels of Lead Contamination Found At Three MPS Schools

District says it has remediated situation, but its buildings have been source of lead poisoning.

By Jeramey Jannene and Sophie Bolich - Feb 6th, 2025 01:36 pm

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# **Major Policy and Legislative Milestones**

Prior to 1986-Lead Solder was used in the construction of OUSD schools and buildings.

### 1986 – Federal Lead Ban (Safe Drinking Water Act Amendment)

 The federal government banned the use of lead pipes and solder in public water systems and plumbing in new construction.

"Lead-free" was defined as no more than 8% lead.

### 1991 - Lead and Copper Rule (EPA)

- Required water systems to monitor drinking water for lead and copper levels and take action if lead concentrations exceeded 15 parts per billion (ppb).
- Triggered corrosion control treatment if levels were too high.

### 2010 - California AB 1953 / SB 1334: Lead-Free Plumbing Law

- California became the first state in the nation to define "lead-free" as no more than 0.25% lead in wetted surfaces (stricter than federal standard).
- Took effect January 1, 2010.
- Applied to all plumbing fixtures, fittings, and materials used for potable water.

## 2011 – Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act (Federal)

- Aligned federal standards with California's lead-free standard.
- Nationwide implementation by January 2014.

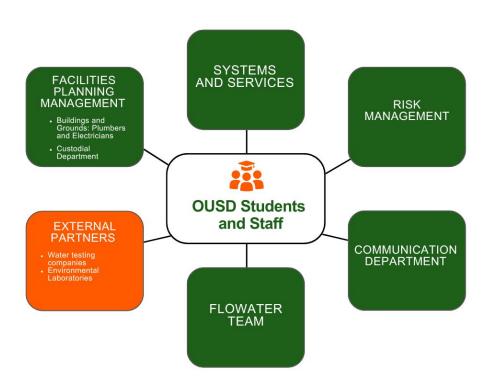
What is our plan to address all potential water quality issues in 96 programs that are housed in buildings that were constructed before this important threshold?

# OUSD has 9 schools/buildings that were built post 2010:

- Claremont MPR
- Fremont High School Building 4000 and 5000
- Oakland High Building G
- Highland Building C
- MetWest/La Escuelita
- Montclair Building C
- Madison Upper (9-12)
- Laurel ECE
- Glenview Elementary

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# **Effective Systems = Effective Teams**



- ❖ The OUSD Board has dedicated \$20.5 Million of Measure J and Y, and one time funding to address this problem.
- This work brings together teams across OUSD to build healthier, more supportive learning environments at every school.





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# Providing Safe, Clean Drinking Water across OUSD

<u>Strategy 1</u> Installation of FloWater Systems

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Strategy 2: Comprehensive

**Diagnostic Testing** 

**Strategy 3** 

Replace Identified Fixtures

**Strategy 4 Signage and Visible Cues** 

Strategy 5
Replace Kitchen Plumbing
Systems

Strategy 6
Improve
Communication Systems

# **Summer 2025 Milestones**

### FloWater Installations: 60 New FloWater units installed

Goal of 100 Students: 1 filtered drinking station includes Brita, MDF, FloWater, and Elkay units

# Comprehensive Testing: 6,781 samples collected

All OUSD sites tested: indoor/outdoor fountains, filtered stations, and kitchen sinks

- 1,949 drinking fountains
- 226 filtered stations
- 236 kitchen sinks

# Site Labeling: 2,411 drinking fountains and filtering stations

- Labeled with asset tags for tracking and monitoring system.
- Expanding to all sinks in the 2025-26 year.

### **Kitchen Renovations**

13 projects to replace sinks, faucets, pipes, and handwashing stations completed

# **Transparency & Communication**

Building automated site notifications and publishing of a public dashboard





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**Strategy 1: Installation of FloWater Systems** 

# WE BELIEVE

EVERY HUMAN HAS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO DRINKING WATER THEY CAN TRUST



# FLOWATER

# THE MOST ADVANCED WATER PURIFICATION TECHNOLOGY

Removes up to 99.9% of contaminants through a 7x Advanced Purification process

Lead is removed from the Advanced Osmosis System

PURIFY —

Sediment

Filter







Advanced Osmosis



**IMPROVE** 

Activated Oxygen



Alkaline Enhanced



Electrolyte Enhanced

FINISH →

Coconut Carbon





# **Filtered Water Station Installation Progress**

# Why FloWater?

- FloWater adopted as the district standard for filtered water stations on March 18, 2025.
- All FloWater units have tested <1.00 ppb lead— well below EPA (15 ppb), state, and internal OUSD (5 ppb) action thresholds

# **District Progress**

- 193 FloWater stations installed since 2024
- 88 new units purchased to support hydration access
- Updated goal: 1 filtered water station per 100 students (previously 200:1)

### **Installation Timeline**

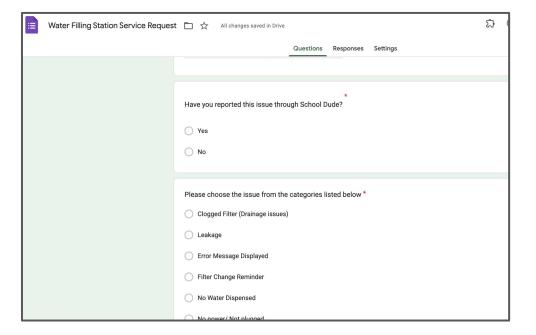
- Phase I: Summer 2025
  - Site assessments, plumbing, and electrical work completed
  - 60 units to be installed before the start of the school year



# **Water Filling Station Service Request**

QR codes are placed on every FloWater unit. When an issue is reported using the QR code, the form is sent to internal staff, who then coordinate directly with FloWater to arrange repairs and monitor the progress.

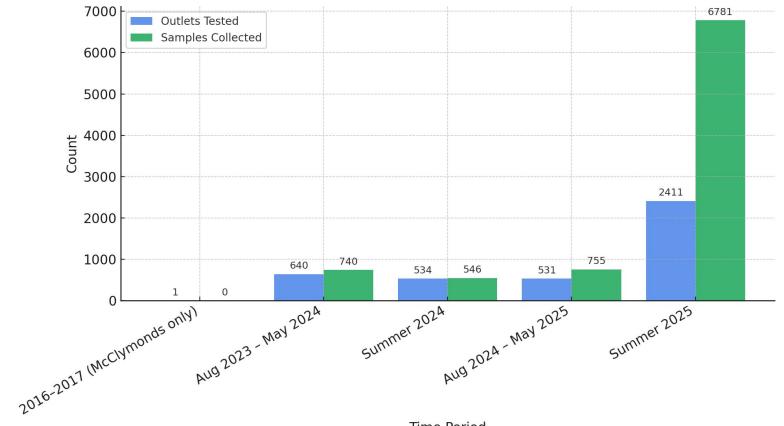




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**Strategy 2: Comprehensive Diagnostic Testing** 

# **Testing Data for Recent Testing Windows**



Time Period

Water Quality Outlet Testing and Sample Collection

# **Testing Protocol**

### **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Guidelines**

- OUSD follows EPA guidelines for school water quality testing
- Developed district-wide protocol to ensure consistency and accuracy

### **Sequential Testing Protocol (Drinking Fountains and Kitchens)**

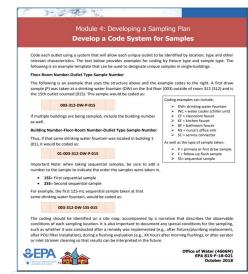
- Three samples collected per fountain:
  - 125 mL Bubbler (tests outlet)
  - 125 mL Angle Stop (tests behind fixture)
  - 250 mL In-Wall Piping (tests upstream plumbing)
- Allows precise identification of lead source if levels are elevated

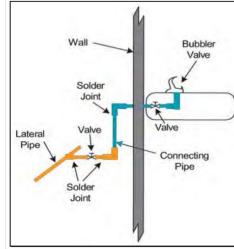
### **Filtered Water Stations**

- Single 250 mL sample collected per unit
- Assesses filter effectiveness and water quality at point of use

### Fixture Labeling & Tracking

- Unique nomenclature system created for every drinking fountain and filtered station
- Labels are matched to test results for targeted repairs
- Enables clear tracking of what's elevated, where it is, and how to fix it





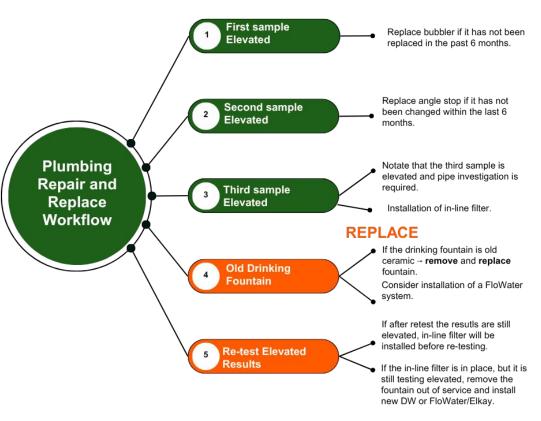
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2021). 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities: Revised Technical Guidance. Retrieved from EPA Guidelines, pp. 62

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# **Strategy 3: Replace Identified Fixtures**

# Replacement and Repair of Fixtures

### **REPAIR**







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# **Strategy 4: Signage and Visible Cues**

# Improving Water Testing Visibility with Stickers

To help students and staff easily identify water safety at school



Placed on water fixtures that meet OUSD's water quality standards.



Placed on **classroom sinks** to clarify that these fixtures are **not intended for drinking**, helping students and staff make informed choices.



Signage is posted at out-of-order drinking fountains. Water to these fixtures is also shut off for repairs

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# **Improved Notification for Community**







Link to reports for individual validation

Punch outs that signify the date of the last test that was below 5 ppb.

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# **Overview and Progress**

Goal: Upgrade kitchen plumbing for safe, reliable water in compliance with health standards

### Key Upgrades

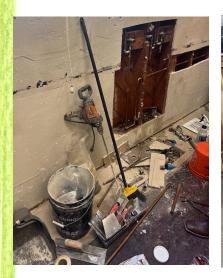
- New Fixtures: sinks, faucets, hand-wash stations
- Pipe Replacement: up to 20 ft per site
- Restored Hot/Cold Access
- Better Water Points for Food Safety
- Completed Before Staff/Student Return

# **Sites With Plumbing Upgrades**

- ✓ Acorn CDC
- ✓ Allendale ES
- ✓ Castlemont HS
- ✓ Centro Infantil
- Edna Brewer MS
- ✓ Hillcrest ES

- ✓ Jefferson CDC
- ∠ Lincoln ES
- ✓ Madison Primary
- ✓ McClymonds HS
- ✓ Sequoia ES
- ✓ Skyline HS

# Kitchen Pipe and Fixture Replacement



Hillcrest K-8



Sequoia ES



Allendale ES



McClymonds HS

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# Internal Communicating and Tracking Repairs

### **Internal Tracking**

- Each elevated fixture is logged in our **central tracking spreadsheet**. A **SchoolDude ticket** is created for the specific school site and assigned to OUSD plumbers.
- Once repairs are completed, the ticket is marked closed.
- The water quality team is notified and then schedules retesting for the repaired fixture.

## **Dashboard in Development (Fall 2025)**

A searchable, public-facing dashboard is being built to display fixture-level test results by school.

### **How Schools Are Notified**

- Principals are notified within 24 hours of any elevated results.
- Communication is sent via email by OUSD Risk Management Officer.
- Schools receive clear information on affected fixtures and next steps.
- We are currently developing an **automated notification system** to streamline this process.



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# **Updated Website**

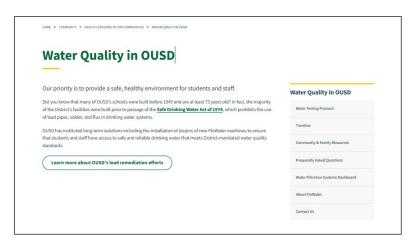
We've established multiple communication channels to ensure students, school staff, families, and the community are informed with the work happening to improve water quality across the District.

ParentSquare: Our main hub to share with parents and caregivers about the work happening across the District.

**Website:** All water test results from across the District are stored here, along with updates on the work we are doing to ensure access to safe, clean drinking water for our schools. Updates are made daily. <a href="https://www.ousd.org/waterquality">www.ousd.org/waterquality</a>

**Board Presentations:** Consistently updating the Board on our progress.

**Contact Us:** Contact your school principal or the Risk Management Office at waterquality@ousd.org



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# Messaging: How We Talk about the Work

A message was shared via Parent Square on Sunday, August 10, 2025 to announce that all schools have FloWater and other water filtration stations for students to use. We clearly communicated that all fixtures that have tested above the District standard have been shut off and will remain out of service until they are repaired or replaced and retested.

### **FloWater Machines**

- FloWater machines are safe; it is a misconception that the water from the machines is contaminated.
- Not a single FloWater machine has ever tested above the District Standard of 5 parts per billion (ppb) for lead. In fact, none has even tested above 1 ppb.

### **School Culture and Climate**

- School leadership and staff will be key in reminding students and families about the safety and effectiveness
  of the machines.
- We currently have 40,000 water bottles ready to go to school sites, and they will be transported in the coming days for students to use.

### Strategy

Because replacing piping inside our older schools will take years and cost tens of millions of dollars, the
best, quickest, and most efficient method of making sure OUSD students are drinking safe and clean water
is to install FloWater machines and take faucets and drinking fountains with elevated lead levels (>5 ppb)
out of service.

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# Challenges

# to Water Connections

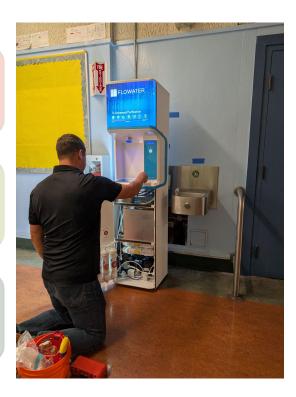
 A major barrier to installation has been the lack of readily accessible water lines at some sites

# Conversion of Existing Fixtures

 Most current installations have replaced existing drinking fountains to utilize pre-existing plumbing

# Phase 2 Complexity

- •Upcoming installations in Phase 2 will require connecting to **in-wall** water lines, which involves
- •Wall modifications
- •More extensive plumbing work
- Coordination with external vendors



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# Looking Ahead to SY 2025-2026

# Water Testing & Faucet Repairs

Schedule repairs based on test results and number of elevated fixtures per site

Retest after repairs

Final step: relabel fixtures and determine next steps

# In-House Sampling

2 certified OUSD staff now trained to collect water samples

Enables quicker response and long-term sustainability

# **Communications**

Address misinformation about FloWater machines

Educate school communities on filter use and repairs

Update website with accurate info and resources

# **Public Dashboard**

Develop searchable tool for viewing water test results by school/fixture

Improves access for families and staff

# FloWater Installations – Phase 2

Ongoing installs of FloWater and Elkay stations

Phase 2 includes major plumbing to connect to building pipes

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# THANK YOU Any Questions?

Additionally, for more information, please reach out:

# **Preston Thomas**

Chief Systems & Services Officer preston.thomas@ousd.org

# Nilufar Abdul

Assistant Manager Systems & Services Department nilufar.abdul@ousd.org

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# **Appendix**





Post-2000 Buildings: Updated Plumbing & Verified **Safe Drinking Water** 

Drinking faucets at these sites, inside and outside of classrooms, are equipped with new plumbing and are considered safe drinking water sources. Out of an abundance of caution we have tested these fixtures, but continued testing is not necessary.



### **Entire Site**

- 81st Ave Campus (Acorn Woodland FS and EnCompass Academy ES)
- Cesar Chavez Campus (Think College Now ES and International Community School)
- Glenview ES
- La Escuelita ES
- MetWest HS

### Allendale ES - Building K

- Brookfield ES Building C
- Castlemont HS Guard Shack
- Chabot ES Building C and D
- Claremont MS MPR
- Coliseum College Preparatory Academy (6-12) - Building D
- East Oakland Pride ES Building B
- East Oakland Pride ES Building B
- Fremont HS Buildings 4000 and 5000
- Highland ES Building C and D

### **Select Buildings**

- Hillcrest (K-8) Building C
- Life Academy (6-12) Building I
- Lincoln ES Building B
- Madison Park Upper (6-12) High School Building
- Markham ES Building B
- Montclair ES Building C
- Oakland HS Building G
- Piedmont Ave ES Building C
- Reach Academy ES Building E
- Urban Promise Academy MS Building G

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# School Year 2024- 25 Milestones

### Infrastructure & Access

• 193 FloWater stations installed across the district

### **Testing, Repairs & Planning**

- Completed initial repairs at Group 1 & 2 schools
- Developed comprehensive testing schedule and remediation budget
- Created centralized tracking system for all fixture test results

### **Transparency & Communication**

- Redesigned website to share testing results and resources
- Launched dashboard for bottle-filling station status
- Developed protocol for Group 3 school testing notifications

### **Facility Improvements**

- Replaced kitchen plumbing at multiple schools with KIT funding
- Incorporated full pipe replacements into all Major Projects: McClymonds
  High, Roosevelt Middle, Garfield Elementary, Coliseum College Prep Academy,
  and Melrose Elementary schools



Note: For more information on the website, dashboard, and Groups 1 through 3, please visit: https://www.ousd.org/community/health-concerns-in-our-communities/water-quality-in-ousd.

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# In the Classroom Practices

### FAQ:

- I really don't trust the water supply, is there anything I can do to reduce exposure
  for students in the classroom. One of the most effective strategies to reduce
  lead concentration in water is to run cold water from the tap for at least
  30-seconds to 2 minutes. This will clear any lead that may have built up. You
  can then use the water for classroom activities.
- 2) Can students wash their hands in sink even if there is lead in the water? "Yes.

  Bathing and showering should be safe for you and your children, even if the water contains lead over EPA's action level. Human skin does not absorb lead in water." Basic Information about Lead in Drinking Water
- I am in an older building and my classroom hasn't been tested, can I still use the water? You can use the water for projects and washing hands, but you should not use the water for drinking unless it has been tested and has the "Meets District Water Standards" sticker. Direct students to water fountains and Flowater systems that have been tested.
- 4) I am in a new building do I still have to worry about water quality? Any new buildings that have been built after 2000 have new plumbing and meet OUSD water safety standards. If you are in a new building, you can use the sinks and water fountains.
- 5) We have water bottle fillers but the lines get too long. As we continue the work of mitigating the lead issues in our district, we are adding more FloWater water dispensers and we are fixing more fountains and faucets, all of which will provide more sources of water for students and staff.





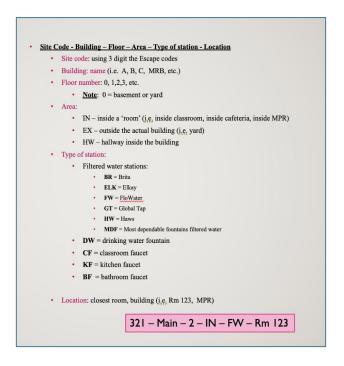
Approved by Alameda County Health Homes Department 9/4/2024

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# **EPA** Compliance

OUSD follows EPA guidelines for school water quality testing and sample coding. We developed a district-wide protocol to ensure consistency and accuracy of water testing.





U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2021). 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities: Revised Technical Guidance. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-07/epa-3ts-guidance-document-english.pdf">https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-07/epa-3ts-guidance-document-english.pdf</a>, pp. 62

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# **Tracking Progress on Water Quality**

### **Centralized Spreadsheet for Real-Time Oversight**

- Tracks each individual fixture with a unique name tag tied to its test results and location
- Allows instant visibility into which units are passing, elevated, shut off, or repaired

### **Integrated Repair Workflow**

- Columns built in for work order tracking, ticket numbers, dates, and completed repairs
- Enables tight coordination with facilities teams and timely resolution of issues

### Foundation for Dashboard & Reporting

- Spreadsheet feeds directly into the district-wide dashboard
- Supports analysis of trends, repair needs, and overall progress

### **Planning Tool for Next Steps**

- Helps prioritize sites, schedule retesting, and evaluate systemic improvements
- Maintains alignment with project timelines and school year readiness





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