



# Ravena Coeymans Selkirk Central School District

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## Lead Testing and Reporting

S9-25-7 | July 2025

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# Audit Results

## Raven Coeymans Selkirk Central School District



### Audit Objective

### Audit Period

Did Ravena Coeymans Selkirk Central School District (District) officials identify, report and implement needed remediation to reduce lead exposure in potable water outlets?

July 1, 2019 – September 30, 2024

### Understanding the Program

Lead is a metal that was commonly used in plumbing and has since been identified as toxic to people, especially young children. Lead poisoning can cause neurological issues such as slowing children's growth, causing learning and behavioral issues or causing hearing and speech problems which can lead to greater difficulty performing well in school and beyond.<sup>1</sup> To aid in combating lead poisoning, New York State (NYS) requires all public school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to test potable (i.e., consumable) water for lead, report the results and implement necessary remediation. Testing and reporting for lead contamination began in 2016, and subsequent testing cycles have followed:

- Cycle One: September 6, 2016 to October 31, 2016.
- Cycle Two: January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 (extended to June 30, 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic).
- Cycle Three: January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2025.<sup>2</sup>

## Audit Summary

District officials did not properly identify, report or implement needed remediation to reduce lead exposure in all potable water outlets as required by NYS Public Health Law and Department of Health (DOH) regulations.<sup>3</sup> We determined 61 of the 322 (19 percent) water outlets we identified at select areas, that students, staff and the public may have access to and could consume water from, were not

1 Lead Exposure Symptoms and Complications – <https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/symptoms-complications/index.html>

2 As of December 22, 2022, schools are now required to test for lead in the water every three years beginning January 1, 2023 for Cycle Three.

3 Public Health Law section 1110; 10 NYCRR subpart 67-4 – Lead Testing in School Drinking Water

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sampled or properly exempted by District officials for Cycle Two. This occurred because District officials did not have a sampling plan to identify all water outlets for sampling or exemption.

District officials also did not have a remedial action plan that detailed which water outlets they exempted from sampling, how they would be secured against use, and what remedial actions were planned or enacted. Because there is no information on the lead levels of the 61 water outlets not sampled for testing, we were unable to determine whether officials identified and remediated all water outlets that would have required it.

Of the 288 water outlets the District sampled for Cycle Two testing, 22 water outlets exceeded the lead action level. We determined that 10 of these 22 outlets (45 percent) with actionable lead levels were still in service without a follow-up test showing they were now below the lead action level or effective controls to prevent them from being used.

District officials reported these results to the DOH's Health Electronic Response Data System (HERDS), the local health department, and staff, parents and guardians, as well as posted the results on the District's website, as required. However, the HERDS reporting of test results were made after the required deadlines, ranging from eight to 13 days late.

This final report includes seven recommendations to that effect. District officials generally agreed with our findings and their response is included in Appendix C.

The Board of Education (Board) has the responsibility to initiate corrective. A written corrective action plan (CAP) that addresses the findings and recommendations in this report must be prepared and provided to our office within 90 days, pursuant to Section 35 of the New York State General Municipal Law, Section 2116-a (3)(c) of the New York State Education Law and Section 170.12 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. To the extent practicable, implementation of the CAP must begin by the end of the next fiscal year. For more information on preparing and filing your CAP, please refer to our brochure, *Responding to an OSC Audit Report*, which you received with the draft audit report. The CAP should be posted on the District's website for public review.

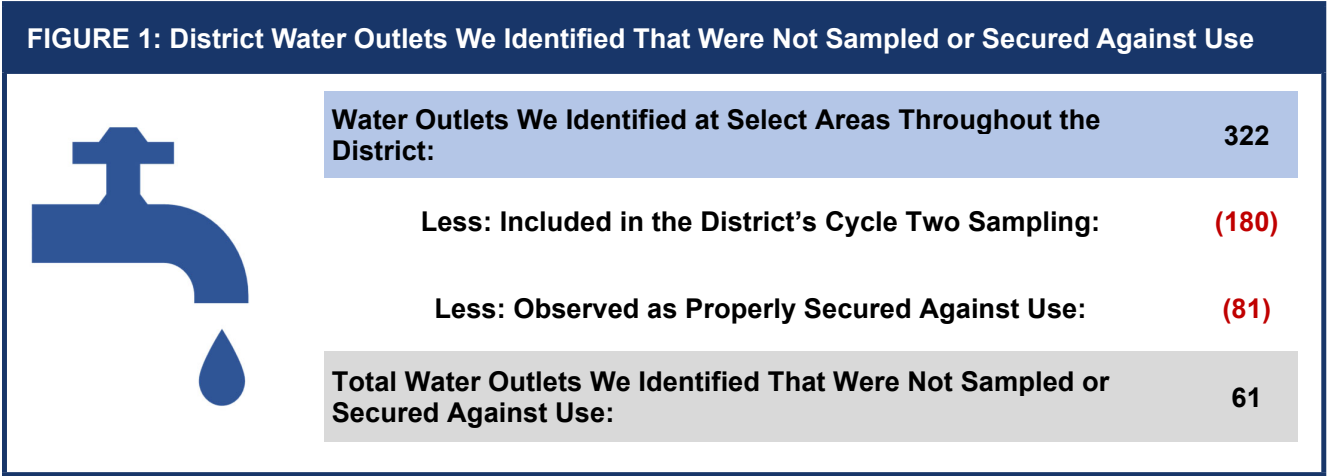
# Lead Testing and Reporting: Findings and Recommendations

In accordance with NYS Public Health Law section 1110 and 10 NYCRR subpart 67-4 (regulations), all public school districts and BOCES (together “schools”), must test potable water outlets for lead contamination and take remedial action if the contamination exceeds the lead action level.<sup>4</sup> The regulations also established requirements for how and when schools must report their test results to local health departments, school staff, students’ parents and/or guardians, DOH and NYS Education Department (NYSED), as well as the public. More details on the water outlet sampling, testing and reporting criteria used in this report, including testing cycles and DOH guidance, are included in Appendix A.

## Finding 1 – District officials did not ensure all required potable water outlets were sampled and tested for lead contamination for Cycle Two.

The District conducted water sampling in January, March and May, 2021 for Cycle Two testing, collecting samples from 288 water outlets, which were then tested at a laboratory certified through the NYS Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP). However, the District did not have a sampling plan to identify all water outlets for sampling, or a remedial action plan that detailed which water outlets they exempted from sampling, how they would be secured against use and what remedial actions were planned or enacted.

We identified 322 water outlets at select areas throughout the District to determine whether the District conducted required sampling of all water outlets during Cycle Two.<sup>5</sup> Of the 322 water outlets we identified, 180 water outlets were included in the 288 water outlets sampled by the District for Cycle Two, and another 81 water outlets we observed as properly secured against use. Therefore, we determined that 61 of the 322 water outlets we identified were not exempted by the District and should have been sampled for testing (Figure 1).



<sup>4</sup> We examined the Cycle Two testing period ending June 30, 2021, which had a lead action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb). Starting in Cycle Three the lead action level was lowered to five ppb. Schools should be aware that water outlets that were acceptable under the previous regulations could exceed the new lead action level and require remediation. Schools should account for this change in their sampling process and remediation efforts by prioritizing sampling water outlets that exceeded five ppb during the previous testing period.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix B for a complete list of water outlets we identified and their locations. See Appendix D for detailed information on our selection criteria for the water outlets selected.

The Director of IT and Building and Grounds (Director) did not have documented sampling or remedial action plans and was unaware of these requirements. He told us he relied on the third-party vendor (Vendor) the District contracted with to ensure the District's lead testing program complied with all requirements. As a result, these 61 outlets, a majority of which were in bathrooms, were not properly secured and exempted, and others were overlooked for sampling and testing.

The District properly secured 81 water outlets against use by shutting off the outlets' water supply, signage (e.g., "Hand washing only - Not for drinking use") combined with other physical or supervisory controls. However, because District officials did not identify all outlets to be sampled for testing, we were unable to determine whether the 61 unsampled or unsecured water outlets we identified were below the lead action level of 15 ppb.

Finally, we reviewed the test results for all water outlets the District sampled to determine whether District officials took appropriate remedial actions for water outlets that exceeded the lead action level. Of the 288 water outlets that the District sampled and tested, 22 water outlets (8 percent) were above the lead action level of 15 ppb.

We confirmed that two of the 22 water outlets were resampled and tested below the lead action level, and ten had effective controls to prevent them from being used for drinking or cooking, which included "Hand washing only - Not for drinking use" signs along with teacher supervision.

However, the 10 remaining water outlets did not have effective controls. Of these 10, five had signs as the only control. Although signs can be used as a short-term control, the DOH guidance is explicit that to be considered an effective long-term control, signs need to be combined with other controls, such as continual education reinforcing to students and employees that the water outlet is not to be used or establishing and enforcing rules to prevent the water outlet's use.

The Director told us the other five water outlets, faucets for sinks used for dishwashing and food preparation in the Middle and High Schools' Family and Consumer Science rooms, previously had effective controls (signs and supervision), however, the sinks and their faucets were replaced in 2023 and not retested and signs were removed (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2: Middle School Family and Consumer Science Room Sinks<sup>a</sup>**



a) Photo taken by OSC auditors in February 2025 with permission from District officials.

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Because the District did not have a remedial action plan, we were unable to verify whether controls were in place prior to the replacements or when the replacements happened.

Had District officials developed detailed sampling and remedial action plans, they could have quickly reviewed the work performed by the Vendor and overseen by the Director and determined whether all water outlets were sampled or exempt from sampling and if the controls implemented were still in place and effective.

## Recommendations

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District officials should:

1. Develop sampling and remediation plans for all District water outlets that could be used for drinking and cooking, including details on which water outlets will be considered exempt from sampling and their controls to secure against use.
2. Sample all water outlets that could be used for drinking and cooking and properly secure any water outlets designated as exempt from sampling.
3. Remediate or implement effective long-term controls for all water outlets that exceed the lead action level.
4. Review all work related to the lead testing program for accuracy and completeness.

## Finding 2 – District officials did not report the results of the lead testing properly or in the required time periods.

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While District officials properly reported test results for Cycle Two to the local health department and on their website, they did not report the results within the required time periods to the other required parties. Specifically:

- District officials did not report the initial test results in HERDS within 10 days, as required. Although the Director told us initial testing results were entered in HERDS within 10 days, no documentation was available to support this claim, and the system showed the results were updated eight to 13 days late. The District also performed one additional test and three retests after the initial testing. The Director told us he reported these results as required but could not provide documentation to support the results were ever reported in HERDS or posted on the District's website.

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- District officials notified staff, parents and/or guardians of all water outlets that tested above the lead action level, in writing as required. However, while the written notifications for the two elementary schools and middle school were within the 10 business day time period, the notification for the high school was one day late.

The Director was unaware that the reporting was not completed within the required time periods. Also, District officials did not develop and document clear procedures for the Director to understand his roles and responsibilities for lead testing and reporting as well as the level of oversight necessary to ensure the Vendor fulfilled its responsibilities adequately. Developing and documenting such procedures may lower the risk that the District will miss reporting deadlines during future testing cycles.

## Recommendations

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District officials should:

5. Develop procedures for all individuals involved in lead testing and reporting and their roles and responsibilities.
6. Notify all required parties in the required time periods after lead testing results are received.
7. Keep records of all notification efforts performed.



# Appendix A: Profile, Criteria and Resources

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## Profile

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The District serves the Towns of Bethlehem, Coeymans, and New Scotland in Albany County, and the Town of New Baltimore in Greene County. The District's buildings are located on campuses in the Town of Coeymans (Village of Ravena) and in the Town of Bethlehem (Hamlet of Selkirk).

The District is governed by the elected nine-member Board. The Board is responsible for managing and controlling the District's financial and educational affairs. The Superintendent is responsible, along with other administrative staff, for managing the District's day-to-day operations under the Board's direction.

The Superintendent designated the Director as the person responsible for coordinating and reporting all lead testing in both Cycle Two and Cycle Three. The District relies on the Director and a third-party Vendor they contract with for its lead testing program. The Vendor is responsible for water outlet inventory, sample collection (performed along with the Director), submitting samples to the laboratory, receiving test results from the laboratory and forwarding test results to the Director. The Director is responsible for providing the District with the testing results from the laboratory and any remedial actions for outlets that test above the lead action level.

## Criteria – Lead Testing and Reporting

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To comply with DOH regulations, school officials should develop a sampling plan that properly addresses potable water outlet sampling, testing and reporting for lead contamination. Pursuant to Chapter 296 of the Laws of 2016, the first cycle of testing and reporting for lead contamination began in 2016, and subsequent testing cycles have followed:

- Cycle One: September 6, 2016 to October 31, 2016.
- Cycle Two: January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 (extended to June 30, 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic).
- Cycle Three: January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2025.

Sampling and Testing – Officials should identify all water outlets to be sampled, their location, and the order in which to collect samples. Water outlets may be located anywhere on school property including external water outlets. According to DOH guidance, the school's superintendent or their designee have the responsibility to identify which water outlets meet the regulation requirements for sampling. For any water outlets determined to fall outside the scope of the regulation, the school must have a remedial action plan that includes details on how those water outlets will not be accessed and/or used for drinking or cooking purposes and should be updated anytime conditions change. All samples must be sent to a laboratory certified by ELAP. When results from sampling of any fixture exceed the lead action level, the water outlet must be immediately taken out of service until remediation is performed to reduce the lead levels to below the action level.

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**Reporting** – School officials must report their testing and remedial action through DOH’s HERDS reporting program, which reports the results of all potable water testing for lead contamination to local county health departments, DOH and NYSED. Importantly, if the school receives test results that show lead contamination exceeds the lead action level, school officials must report the exceedances directly to the local health department within one business day, and notify all school staff, parents, and guardians in writing within 10 days. School officials should coordinate with local health department officials ahead of the sampling and testing to confirm the health department’s preferred method of reporting (e.g., email, an email and phone call, etc.) for test results that show lead contamination exceeds the lead action level. Finally, schools must post the results of all testing, including information about remedial actions taken, on their website.

To assist schools in their compliance with the regulations, the DOH developed the *Lead Testing in School Drinking Water Guidance Manual*.<sup>6</sup> The manual describes in detail how schools should develop and implement their lead testing program, including templates on assigning roles, staff, parent and/or guardian letters, posting results on school websites, as well as documenting and tracking remedial actions.

To ensure a school’s lead testing program is successful, the school should identify and document which individuals will be responsible for the following:

- Who will be the main contact for the program?
- Who will create the sampling plan?
- Who will collect the samples?
- Who will coordinate with the laboratory and manage the test results?
- Who will perform remediation?
- Who will communicate the results to the public?
- Who will report the data and information to the local health department and enter it into the NYS DOH reporting application (HERDS)?
- Who will keep records?

All potable water outlets at a school that could be used for cooking or drinking should be tested for lead. Examples include:

- Combination bottle fill stations and drinking fountains (both the fountain and bottle fill nozzles should be tested),
- Classroom sinks,
- Food washing sinks,

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/docs/leadtestinginschoolsguidancedocument.pdf>

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- Kitchen kettle filler outlets,
  - Ice machines,
  - Hand washing outlets, including those in bathrooms, and
  - Athletic field outlets and any other sink known to be or potentially used for consumption.

Water outlets that are not going to be tested need to be listed on the remedial action plan and actions must be taken to properly secure them to prevent them from being used for cooking or drinking. Actions such as turning the water off at the outlet not only prevent access but also prevent the water outlet from being used at all. If a water outlet still needs to be used, the following are examples of controls that should be combined with each other to prevent use:

- Using physical controls such as locks or requiring special tools that prevent physical access to the water outlet,
- Regularly informing students and staff which water outlets are not to be used,
- Placing signs that say “Do not Drink, Non-Potable Water” or similar.<sup>7</sup> Signs must be clearly visible and in close proximity to the affected outlets. Placing a sign at a room entrance (i.e. lavatory entrance) is not acceptable.
- Establishing, and consistently enforcing, rules such as “No Eating or Drinking in the Science Lab.”

These controls are only considered effective if they are used together. For example, signs can be removed due to vandalism or accidents, but if students and staff are regularly told that bathrooms are not to be used for drinking it would reduce the risk that someone may use a bathroom sink. The remedial action plan should be updated whenever there is a change, including when new water outlets are designated, or old ones are removed, new test results become available, additional remediation is planned or completed, or controls are added or removed. Additionally, a maintenance and monitoring schedule should help ensure remediation efforts are still operating effectively.

Schools must report the results of their lead testing to NYS agencies, their local county health department, staff, parents and/or guardians, as well as posting their results and remediation actions on their website. Timing always starts once the school receives the results and there are different notification and timing requirements if any results exceed the lead action level. The reporting requirements are as follows:

**Results Exceed the Lead Action Level** – The school must notify their local health department within one business day, and staff, parents and guardians in writing within 10 business days. Importantly, posting this information on the school’s website or through social media does not qualify as notification in this case.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For examples of signage, see page 12 of the DOH’s Guidance Manual: <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/docs/leadtestinginschoolsguidancedocument.pdf#page=14>

<sup>8</sup> See page 14 of DOH’s Guidance Manual: <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/docs/leadtestinginschoolsguidancedocument.pdf#page=16>

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After Any Testing is Done (Regardless of Whether Results Exceed the Lead Action Level) – The school must notify the DOH, NYSED, and their local county health department. Reporting is done through the HERDS system and must be done within 10 business days after results are received. School officials must post on their website the results of all their testing, including any remediation efforts performed or planned, within six weeks of receiving results.

Schools should keep all records related to their lead testing program for at least 10 years after document creation, and it is recommended that all such records be kept on-site in a centrally accessible repository.

Additional DOH resources, guidance and publications on lead in drinking water can be found at:

<https://health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/>

In addition, our website can be used to search for other Lead Testing and Reporting audits:

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/audits>

# Appendix B: District Water Outlets

Figure 3: District Water Outlets Not Sampled or Secured Against Use for Cycle Two by Location

Location	Water Outlets We Identified at Select Areas Throughout the District	Less: Included in the District's Cycle Two Sampling	Less: Observed as Properly Secured Against Use	Total Water Outlets We Identified That Were Not Sampled or Secured Against Use
Hallways or Common Spaces	41	(5)	(36)	0
Bathroom	141	(67)	(24)	50
Elementary Classroom	47	(35)	(8)	4
Cafe/Kitchen/Food	44	(40)	0	4
Science or Art Room	47	(33)	(11)	3
Outside/Sports Areas	2	0	(2)	0
Totals	322	(180)	(81)	61

# Appendix C: Response From District Officials

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[www.rcscsd.org](http://www.rcscsd.org)

Dr. Brian Bailey, Superintendent of Schools, Ext. 6003  
Jean Winkler, Assistant Superintendent for C&I, Ext. 6003  
Jesse Boehme, School Business Administrator, Ext. 6000  
Sue Starr, BOE Clerk, Ext. 6000

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6/30/25

To Whom It May Concern,

The Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk Central School District appreciates the opportunity to review the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) draft audit report and provide our response. We take the findings and recommendations outlined in the report seriously, as they highlight critical areas where we can enhance the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and community.

We acknowledge the audit findings, including the identification of deficiencies in our testing protocols, reporting, and communications, specifically:

**1. Develop a sampling and remediation Action plan.**

- a. We agree with the recommendation to establish a comprehensive remedial action plan. This plan outlines actions for outlets exceeding the lead action level and ensures proper documentation and secure storage of exempt outlets.

**2. Sample all water outlets**

- a. The district will ensure that water outlets are accessible for drinking and cooking, and properly secure any water outlets designated as exempt from sampling.

**3. Review all work**

- a. In the future, the district will focus on the accuracy and completeness of the lead testing program.

**4. Develop procedures**

- a. The district will collaborate with our safety consultant to establish clear procedures for all individuals involved in lead testing and reporting, and their roles and responsibilities.

**5. Communication**

- a. The district will notify all required parties promptly after receiving lead testing results.

**6. Record Keeping**

- a. The district will maintain records of all notification efforts made.

We would also like to provide additional context regarding the timeline and circumstances surrounding the audit findings.

The OSC report states: *District officials reported these results to the DOH's Health Electronic Response Data System (HERDS), the local health department, and staff, parents, and guardians, as well as posted the results on*

Inquiry • Collaboration • Risk-Taking • Participation • Empathy

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*the District's website, as required. However, the HERDS reporting of test results were made after the required deadlines, ranging from eight to 13 days late.*

The District did submit these results within the required deadline. There were errors in the initial submission, which were corrected after the submission window. This is why the "modified date" field shows 8-13 days beyond the initial deadline. The District requests that OSC provide guidance on how to document this appropriately for the next round of sampling.

The Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk Central School District is dedicated to continuously improving and being transparent about our water safety practices. We appreciate the thorough review and recommendations from the OSC and look forward to making meaningful changes to ensure the health and safety of our community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please contact Bill Schrom, Director of Facilities and Network Operations, for additional information or clarification.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian Bailey  
Superintendent of Schools

# Appendix D: Audit Methodology and Standards

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We conducted this audit pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article 3 of the New York State General Municipal Law. We obtained an understanding of internal controls that we deemed significant within the context of the audit objective and assessed those controls. Information related to the scope of our work on internal controls, as well as the work performed in our audit procedures to achieve the audit objective and obtain valid audit evidence, included the following:

- We interviewed District officials and reviewed various records and reports to gain an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved in the process, and how individuals performed their duties during the Cycle Two period that closed June 30, 2021, and for Cycle Three which is still ongoing until December 31, 2025.
- We reviewed all available documentation that the District had for sampling and testing for Cycle Two that closed June 30, 2021, including District maps, laboratory chain of custody and result reports, and ELAP certifications. We supplemented this with our own observations of the District's current water outlets at each District building. We identified the following as high-risk areas/outlets based on the DOH guidance:
  - Hallway drinking fountains and bottle-filling stations, outside areas, kitchens, cafeterias, and cooking classrooms, as they could affect large numbers of individuals at the District, including visitors.
  - Elementary classrooms, as they could affect young students who are particularly vulnerable to lead exposure.
  - Bathrooms, or other areas where individuals would be unsupervised and able to access water from faucets.
  - Art and Science classrooms, as they were specifically mentioned in DOH's guidance.

Using this information, we selected 322 water outlets, including all water outlets located in areas that we determined could have a high-risk of affecting individuals at the District based on the DOH guidance.<sup>9</sup> We observed the controls present at each water outlet and whether they had been sampled for lead testing.

- For the 288 water outlets sampled for testing by the District, we identified 22 tested samples with results that exceeded the lead action level and determined whether District officials took appropriate remedial actions or had a test result after the initial exceedance that was below the lead action level.
- We reviewed all available documentation that the District had for reporting the laboratory results including the Director's email receipts that he received the lab results, HERDS reporting, emails confirming website postings, and email correspondences with Albany County Department of Health.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/docs/leadtestinginschoolsguidancedocument.pdf>



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We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

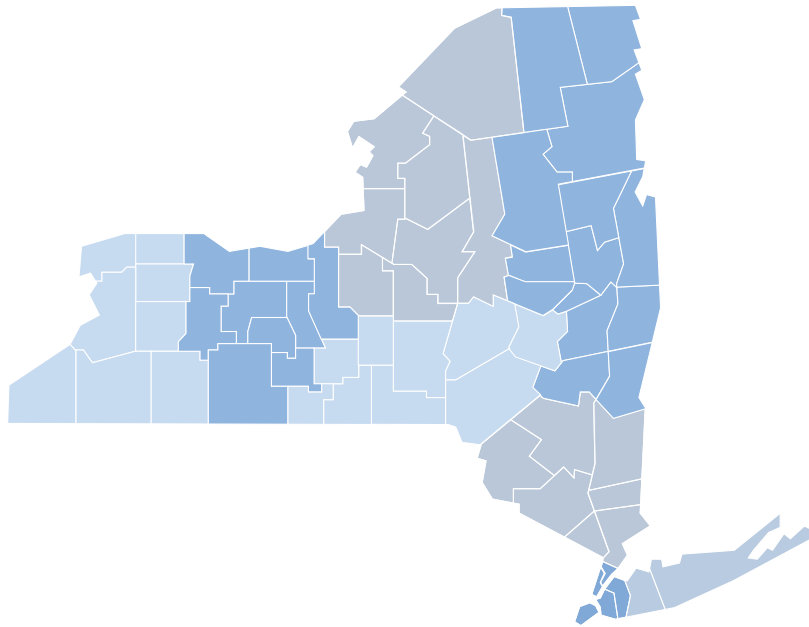
Unless otherwise indicated in this report, samples for testing were selected based on professional judgment, as it was not the intent to project the results onto the entire population. Where applicable, information is presented concerning the value and/or size of the relevant population and the sample selected for examination.

## Contact

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