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# Elevated levels of lead and copper found in Easton, Hull, Norwell, and Quincy schools

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SUZANNE KREITER / BOSTON GLOBE STAFF

**School officials say that taps and bubblers with elevated levels of lead or copper have been turned off, and that the problem apparently was with the fixtures and not the water source.**

**By Johanna Seltz**

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT NOVEMBER 18, 2016

Elevated levels of lead and copper have been found recently in faucets and drinking fountains in schools in Easton, Hull, and Norwell after Quincy reported unacceptable lead levels at eight schools in October.

Statewide, 164 schools have found levels of lead and 76 have found levels of copper above regulatory limits this year, according to Ed Coletta, a spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Protection. High levels of lead and copper have been linked to health issues, particularly in children.

School officials in the area communities said that the taps and bubblers with issues had been turned off, and that the problem apparently was with the fixtures and not the water source.

In Hull, officials sent a letter to parents on Nov. 8 informing them that copper readings exceeding the acceptable levels for drinking water were found in several water fountains and faucets in the Lillian Jacobs

Elementary School. The levels fell, though, when water was run for 30 seconds and then retested.



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“It is important to point out that these were standing water readings, and all subsequent flushing water results were within normal levels,” the letter from school business administrator David De Gennaro said.

“We take these results very seriously and have taken immediate corrective action to safeguard the health of students, faculty and staff,” he added. He said the fixtures would remain off until they were replaced.

Norwell Superintendent Matthew Keegan said on Nov. 7 that of 173 water sources tested at four

schools, only a few had slightly elevated lead and copper levels. He said the bubblers and faucets were turned off while a more permanent solution was sought.

In Easton, Superintendent Andrew Keough told parents that both copper and levels exceeding acceptable limits were found at the Center School, Parkview Elementary School, Moreau Hall, and Easton Middle School.

“It’s important to note that the presence of small amounts of lead or copper in school water, particularly in older buildings, is not unusual and there are appropriate steps that can be taken to quickly address the issues,” Keough said on the school webpage. “We are taking all of those necessary steps and will continue to keep the parents and staff in these schools informed.”

The state announced in April that it was providing \$2 million from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust to help fund water testing in public schools and help identify any problems. An additional \$750,000 was announced on Nov. 15.

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