



Ms. Carmen Farina  
Chancellor  
New York City Department of Education  
Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

February 21, 2017

Dear Chancellor Farina:

We write to express our shared concern over recent reports indicating elevated levels of lead in the drinking water at New York City public schools.

Following new guidelines issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, a retesting of the plumbing infrastructure at New York City public schools found nine times as many water outlets, such as sinks or water fountains, with lead amounts above the EPA's "action level" of 15 parts per billion.

This issue concerns a significant number of schools in the five boroughs. According to a recently released report by the New York State Department of Health, of the 46,654 total outlets tested in New York City public schools, 42,261 (91 percent) were under the EPA lead action level. That leaves nearly ten percent of all tested water outlets with heavier lead contamination levels than allowed, putting students at considerable risk for potential lead poisoning and the associated negative health effects that come with it. According to the EPA even low levels of lead in the blood of children can cause numerous problems, including behavior and learning problems, lower IQ and hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems, anemia and others.

We are calling for immediate action, as the health and quality of life of our children and their families are at stake. First and foremost, the Department of Education's (DOE) immediate action should be provide an alternative water supply to all affected schools, either through the form of bottled water or water coolers. In addition, all students should be offered testing for lead exposure, free-of-charge.

In addition, we are further recommending that the issue be rectified and that all DOE schools receive water filtration systems to prevent future contamination. We are further recommending that the DOE implement regular testing for water contamination.

While we understand that it takes some time to repair and replace contaminated fixtures, our children should not be unnecessarily exposed to high levels of lead while they wait for those changes to take place. The tragedy of Flint, Michigan should not be repeated here.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Three handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'Ruben Diaz Jr.', the second is 'Eric L. Adams', and the third is 'Gale A. Brewer'.

Ruben Diaz Jr.  
Bronx Borough President

Eric L. Adams  
Brooklyn Borough President

Gale A. Brewer  
Manhattan Borough President

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'Melinda Katz' and the second is 'James S. Oddo'.

Melinda Katz  
Queens Borough President

James S. Oddo  
Staten Island Borough President