



SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Date: May 28, 2024

To: School Board Members
Dr. Kraig Steinhoff, Superintendent
Huron School District Administrators

From: Kelly Christopherson

RE: New Drinking Water Requirements

The Huron School District has been approached by Mark Mayer, Office of Water, Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources with an opportunity to partner with DANR regarding new drinking water requirements associated with lead in the water. In the next few years the requirements will go into effect and schools will be required to test their drinking water for lead and fix the source of the lead if any is found.

DANR is offering a free program to two school districts in South Dakota to be funded by the Environmental Protection Agency's WIIN Act 2107 Grant. Huron is being offered the opportunity to be one of the two partner school districts because our free and reduced lunch percentage exceeds 50%. The advantage of being a partner school is all costs, including fixing any problems found, will be paid for by the grant.

Attached is an email from Mark Mayer and a two-page summary of the program along with a timeline. They are requesting a response from the school by June 5.

My recommendation is to accept this offer to partner with DANR to test the school district's drinking water for lead.

Christopherson, Kelly

From: Mayer, Mark <Mark.Mayer@state.sd.us>
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:53 PM
To: Christopherson, Kelly
Cc: McIntire, Mark; Fagnan, Erin
Subject: Testing and Remediation for Lead in School Drinking Water Project
Attachments: Huron School District Lead Project Summary .docx

Good afternoon Kelly,

My apologies for not getting this summary to you sooner. Attached is a one-page summary describing the project we are proposing to utilize EPA WIIN Grant funds to help a two school districts address upcoming new drinking water requirements associated with lead. I hope the summary is helpful in giving a brief overview of the project and our goals such that you can review it with the appropriate decision makers of the Huron School District. It is our hope that the district will see the potential benefits of participating in the project and getting out ahead of the future requirements while also helping DANR gain a better understanding of this issue. The data we hope to obtain will help us develop a better statewide strategy to addressing the future EPA requirements being proposed for all public water systems.

As stated in the summary, we are hoping to issue an RFP in early June to solicit proposals from consultants to help us accomplish the goals of this project. We would appreciate it if you could discuss this project with the appropriate district decision makers and get back to us on or before June 5, if at all possible. If that date will not work but you are still interested and need more time, please let me know and we can possibly adjust our RFP timing accordingly.

I will be out of the office 5/24 – 5/31 but will have limited access to my email. If you have any questions or need a more immediate reason between now and June 3rd, please feel free to contact either Mark McIntire at 605-773-6575 or Erin Fagnan at 605-910-4953. Thanks again for your time and interest in possibly partnering with DANR on this project.



Mark S. Mayer, P.E.
Director
Office of Water
Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources
605.773.6039 | Cell: 605-280-6922
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Testing and Remediation of Lead in School Drinking Water Project

The Department of Agriculture & Natural Resource (DANR) is launching the Lead Sampling Program to help public schools investigate sources of lead within their plumbing systems. This program will be offered free of charge during the 2024-2025 school year and is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency's WIIN Act 2107 grant. DANR is finalizing a request for proposals to hire a consultant to sample the concentration of lead in all locations used to supply drinking water in all school district buildings. If any drinking water locations tested exceed the maximum level recommended, DANR's consultant will prepare recommended remediation/mitigation alternative for the district's consideration. Once a final remediation/mitigation plan is determined, DANR's consultant will prepare a bid package with plans and specifications for the district to secure bids to mitigate any issues. DANR has been awarded additional WIIN Act grant funds that will be sub-granted to the district to cover the costs of the successful remediation/mitigation plan bid.

EPA's prioritization criteria ask that preference should be given to schools with at least 50% of the children receiving free and reduced lunch. Because the Huron School District meets these criteria, DANR would like to partner with the Huron School District and specifically list the district as one of the two locations our consultant will focus their efforts on this project.

Why should we be concerned about lead?

EPA is concerned about lead exposure in schools because children are more susceptible to lead poisoning and exposure to lead can cause damage to the brain and nervous system, slow growth, and development, or result in learning, hearing and speech problems. EPA is finalizing a revision to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act that will require water systems to sample in schools and licensed childcare facilities for the occurrence of lead in the drinking water. If results indicate that the lead concentration is too high, the system will be required to work with the school to send information home with the impacted students.

How does lead enter drinking water in schools?

Lead typically enters drinking water through plumbing materials inside a facility or the pipe that delivers water from the water main in the street to a facility. This soft metal was not likely a popular service line choice for buildings with service lines greater than 2 inches in diameter. More common sources of lead within facilities are fixtures (faucets, water coolers, etc.), copper lines with lead solder, and a variety of in-line leaded brass components such as shut-off valves. Many facilities nationwide purchased these leaded materials unknowingly over the last 100 years. Unfortunately, sources of lead likely exist within new and old buildings alike as the "lead-free" standard for plumbing materials allowed up to 8% lead until 2014. Water chemistry can make lead more or less likely to leach into water which is why sampling drinking water in the facility is the most accurate way to determine if there is a problem.

Who is eligible for the program?

Public K-12 schools are eligible to participate in this program. Priority will be given to assisting schools that are in low-income areas.

What does the program include?

The program provides all the materials and support needed to conduct baseline sampling of all drinking water fixtures/outlets in all school district buildings where students and staff have access to drinking water.

Each participating school will receive:

- Sampling of all water fixtures used for drinking water.
- Sample results.
- Public education templates, communication materials and outreach plan.
- Remediation/mitigation recommendations and associated cost estimates.
- Bid packages for the district to use to hire a contractor to complete remediation/mitigation recommendations. DANR will process a sub-grant recipient agreement with the district to provide up to 100% of the costs associated with the agreed upon plans and specifications.
- Post-remediation follow-up sampling.

What are the project timelines and the school district's responsibilities?

DANR will be issuing the RFP to hire a consultant in June 2024. We anticipate being under contract with our consultant and kick off the initial project planning with the District in August 2024. Initial sampling would begin in the fall of 2024. Remediation/mitigation planning would be completed in January 2025 and bid packages would be completed for the district to bid in March of 2025. Remediation/mitigation efforts would be conducted during the summer of 2025 and follow-up/final sampling would be conducted in November 2025. The district would need to coordinate with DANR's consultant during the initial sampling and remediation/mitigation planning phases. Any public messaging during this phase would be a collaborative effort between DANR's consultant and the district however the actual distribution of any public messaging would be a responsibility of the district. The most time intensive aspect of the project for the district would be during the remediation/mitigation bidding and construction phase. DANR's consultant would be available for support and assistance during the bidding and construction phase of the project but this effort would be managed by district staff. The final sampling phase of the project would be coordinated by DANR's consultant and results should demonstrate that the remediation/mitigation project was successful. DANR's consultant will assist the district with preparing messaging of the project's success to close out the project.