



**West Orange Public Schools**  
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**Superintendent of Schools**

**Mr. Jeffrey S. Rutzky**

## STATEMENT FROM WEST ORANGE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

### LEGIONELLA TESTING

A parent whose child was attending summer camp at Redwood Elementary School reported that her child was sick with what the doctor said could be Legionnaires Disease. The child was ultimately determined not to have the disease and is now feeling well. Out of abundance of caution, the district immediately began environmental testing at Redwood and began to plan for testing all schools and facilities.

On August 14, 2018, results from the consultant conducting the Legionella testing, Garden State Environmental, indicated that 4 of the 15 samples taken at Redwood Elementary School contained very low levels of Legionella bacteria.

As a result, the district immediately implemented remedial steps as recommended by our expert consultant. The steps included: (1) installing filters on the water sources that tested positive, (2) replacing faucets in the affected areas, (3) covering all water fountains despite the disease can only be transmittable via airborne droplets and not from drinking affected water, and (4) removing, cleaning and sanitizing all aerators (screens) in all rooms.

A meeting with the consultant from Garden State Environmental, Health Department representatives, and township and district personnel took place to discuss test results and remediation efforts so resources could be compared and utilized effectively between the District and Township.

OMEGA Environmental was hired to perform a chlorination procedure that will eliminate all bacteria in the pipes. Retesting on the 4 areas that tested positive will happen immediately after the chlorination is completed.

Township Director of Health, Theresa DeNova stated: “We have been advised of the following facts with regard to Legionella: (a) it is not contagious, person to person; (b) it is not airborne; (c) it cannot be contracted by drinking or touching water; and (d) the way it is contracted is by inhaling contaminated mist,” said Director DeNova.

Below is a statement from New Jersey American Water's Vice President of Governmental Affairs Kevin Watsey to the community of West Orange.

“Providing safe water is New Jersey American Water's number one priority and a responsibility we share with all our customers. Although the drinking water we deliver is treated and meets all federal and state water quality standards and requirements, the quality of that water can change once it leaves our pipes and enters domestic plumbing systems. When we became aware of the issues the Township of West Orange experienced with legionella in the plumbing infrastructure of its Municipal Township Building, we began proactively working with Mayor Parisi, his staff, health officials and town consultants to provide expert guidance and assistance as the town works to remedy this situation. We are committed to helping the Township resolve this issue as they work to disinfect and upgrade their building systems to ensure a healthy and safe work environment for their employees.”

Please know that New Jersey American Water has been working with the school district to provide expert guidance and assistance as the school district works to resolve the situation.

An update will be shared on Thursday, August 30<sup>th</sup>. For additional information about Legionella, click on the links below provided by New Jersey American Water.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPLukCLREYg>

<https://amwater.com/corp/water-quality-and-wasterwater-service>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV0bmdliQjQ>