

Schools' water supply test results are in

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KNIGHTSTOWN — Parents with a child attending a Charles A. Beard school can rest a little easier knowing the water supply throughout the three-school system isn't contaminated with lead.

C.A.B. Superintendent Jediah Behny informed the board in November he intended to have the water at Knightstown Elementary, Intermediate and High School tested for lead at no cost to the corporation. He explained the testing would be paid for thanks to a program offered by the Indiana Finance Authority in partnership with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

At Tuesday evening's meeting of the board, Behny reported the testing was done and although a final report has not yet been made available, preliminary results indicate only three minor issues exist that the superintendent said are already being taken care of.

The testing involved checking lead levels in the water coming into the three schools, as well as the plumbing in each facility and the faucets and other fixtures involved with making water available to staff and students.

"Of all of the plumbing tested throughout our entire district, we had zero water samples that were anywhere near alarming," Behny said. "We had three water fixtures that required some action. Two of those have already been done and one has replacement parts that have been ordered."

The first two fixtures were outdoor spickets he said were not designed to deliver potable water. Behny said there were no health concerns with the two fixtures, but the hardware itself was not specifically designed and certified to deliver potable water. The superintendent said those two spickets have been shut off and the athletic teams that have used the spickets in the past will be obtaining water from an alternate source.

The other fixture in which there was some concern is a faucet at Knightstown Intermediate School that Behny said was old enough that it did not contain up to date stamps or imprints that show it is specifically designed to deliver potable water. That fixture has been shut down and a new faucet has been ordered. The old unit will be replaced as soon as the new one arrives, he said.

"I'm very pleased with the results, but am more pleased at the opportunity we were provided," he said. "I can't imagine how expensive it would have been for the school corporation to undergo this testing, but as we've seen recently in the news ... these

issues can create huge problems for people, which is why it's still a concern of mine that as of today just a little over 50 percent of all school corporations in the State of Indiana have agreed to even sign up for this. It costs them nothing, other than the fact they are on the hook for fixing any problems that [they] may find.”

At least a couple school board members later applauded Behny's efforts in taking advantage of the free testing offered by the state and expressed their relief the water being made available to students and staff is safe.

The lead testing program is voluntary because current state and federal laws do not require schools that purchase water from a public water system to test for lead.

According to the Indiana Finance Authority's web site (www.in.gov/ifa/2958.htm), all five of Henry County's public school corporations have enrolled in the testing program; however, none of the school systems in Rush or Fayette County have done so.

School districts may still enroll in the program until Jan. 17, 2018.