

January 26, 2026

In mid-December, we let families and school staff know we would be testing our school's water. On December 29, 2025, we tested our school's water to see if it contains lead, a heavy metal that can cause health problems if ingested (swallowed).

We received lab results on January 23, 2026 and learned that our water contained lead in some areas of our schools.

We have identified the faucets, water fountains, and/or pipes that contain lead. Because of the level of lead found in water, the EPA requires we address these fixtures. When those water fixtures have been removed or replaced, we will send an update to parents and staff.

Lead is a heavy metal that can cause health problems if ingested (swallowed) and was commonly used in building construction into the 1980s. Since lead was commonly used in building construction, we knew we might find lead in our school. It's important to remember the level set by EPA for taking action is 10 parts per billion or more. The EPA says a way to visualize one part per billion, is one drop of water in one-billion drops of water, or one drop of water in a swimming pool.

Beginning in November 2027, every school in South Dakota will be required to perform this testing. Belle Fourche School District volunteered to be a part of an early testing program and will therefore receive funding to help remove and replace the affected fixtures that were found to contain lead.

For more information visit: <https://doh.sd.gov/topics/diseases/infectious/sd-clppp/lead-poisoning-resources/>

Lead was found in drinking water in the Belle Fourche High School during testing done on December 29, 2025. Belle Fourche School District has taken every faucet and water fountain out of service that was found to contain lead at 10 parts per billion or greater. Our School District will replace those faucets and water fountains during the spring/summer of 2026. There are some faucets and fixtures that will have the water turned off and taken out of service or completely removed.

Some levels of lead were found in drinking water in the Belle Fourche Middle School and South Park Elementary during testing done on December 29, 2025. The testing showed varied results, but with the amounts of lead less than the 10 ppb threshold. While it is not required by the EPA to remove or replace the affected fixtures, State funding may be available to replace these fixtures because of the school's participation in the early testing program.

On December 29, 2025, we tested the North Park school's water to see if it contains lead, a heavy metal that can cause health problems if ingested (swallowed). We are happy to report that lab results show our water did not contain lead.

As new guidance comes in, Belle Fourche School District will continue to stay ahead and keep you informed every step of the way.

If you have questions, please contact Tommy Coyle, Director of Facilities and Transportation, (605) 723-3360.