Staff Report

ABBOTSFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

DATE: April 11, 2017

To Board of Education (Public Meeting)

From Ray Velestuk, Secretary-Treasurer

RE: **Final Report – Completion of Water Quality Project**

This report is being presented for the Board's information.

BACKGROUND:

In 1989, a change in the BC Plumbing Code restricted the use of lead in domestic drinking water lines (soldering). Upon direction from the Ministry of Education, all thirty-six school district sites built before 1990 were tested during the Summer 2016. District staff conducted the preliminary testing, including 72 hours, 24 hours, and 2-minute flush tests. The results from the 24-hour test were relied upon for a short term action plan, with twenty-one sites identified.

The short-term action plan included several steps, including placement of temporary water coolers for all sites affected, deactivated drinking locations with elevated levels, and adding signage at water sources unavailable for use. District staff met with Marc Zubel, Fraser Health and began a systematic communication plan through the District's website, synervoice automated messaging, and letters to parents and staff. Meetings with Fraser Health continued as the project team carried forward with repairs. In addition, the school district applied and received $840,000 in funding through the "School Enhancement Program" to repair pipes and fixtures at the failed sites. Pinchin West Ltd. (PWL) was hired as an independent consultant to conduct additional water testing at twenty-one buildings.

The primary purpose for PWL's investigation was to determine where in the building plumbing systems the cause of elevated levels of lead is. PWL undertook a sampling at the twenty-one sites, following a methodology by the Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), along with reviewing the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality* (GCDWQ) and *BC Water Quality Guidelines for Drinking Water* (BCDWQ). Sample locations included (I) the closest water sources (fountains, kitchen sinks, bathroom sinks) to the water entry point, (ii) all water sources where the pipe branch run ends and (iii) drinking water sources throughout the building.

Upon completion and analysis of the water samples, results were classified into three groups:

1) **Group A** - Analysis results reported lead concentrations *below* the GCDWQ and BCDWQ guidelines in each of the stagnant and flushed water samples.
2) **Group B** – Analysis results reported lead concentrations *above* the GCDWQ and BCDWQ guidelines in select water samples at some branch run ends or other drinking water sources in the building
3) **Group C** – Analysis results reported lead concentrations *above* the GCDWQ and BCDWQ guidelines in select water samples at close drinking source to entry points *and* some branch run ends.

UPDATE:

The Project Team led by Josh Currie, worked within the three tiers to achieve safe water quality throughout the District and they have completed all work on schedule and within budget. Six work crews, including three plumbing Contractors (Apco, Tri-West and RAM Mechanical), asbestos removal contractor (Envirovac), Unitech contractors (performing wall repairs) and school district plumbers have undertaken this complex project. In some repairs asbestos removal on weekends has been required.

All thirty-six sites have now met the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality* (GCDWQ) and *BC Water Quality Guidelines for Drinking Water* (BCDWQ) as having clear, site safe, drinking water. In addition to completing this project on time and on budget, the school district has also submitted the Ministry required report documenting the completed work and water test results. The school district has also received positive comments from Marc Zubel, Fraser Health regarding completion of this project.