



Tri County Area Schools  
Tradition • Character • Achievement • Success

## TRI COUNTY AREA SCHOOLS Educational Service Center

---

ALLEN CUMINGS, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

August 3, 2018

Dear Parents and Community,

In keeping with our commitment of open communication, I want to inform you of a recent issue involving our middle school. With safe drinking water in the news these days, we are committed as a district to provide our students and staff with a positive and safe environment.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has begun a statewide initiative to test drinking water from schools using well water and community water supplies to determine if public health action is needed. The test identifies man-made chemicals called per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Since PFAS break down slowly and move easily into water, it is not uncommon to find low levels of PFAS in drinking water. They are also found in stain repellants, nonstick cookware, waterproof clothing, food wrappers, and other household products.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has suggested limits for two PFAS in drinking water, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). The EPA has not set health advisory levels for other PFAS compounds. All Tri County Area Schools are being tested by AECOM, the MDEQ's contractor. On August 2, 2018, the district received results showing that the Middle School tested at 62 parts per trillion (ppt). This is slightly below the EPA required limits for PFOA and PFOS of 70 parts per trillion. PFAS were not detected at Tri County High School. The elementary schools are on municipal water and are being tested and we will release the results once they are received.

Tri County Area Schools is committed to providing our students, staff and community with quality drinking water. We are working closely with MDEQ and will investigate the source of the PFAS issue at the Middle School. Even though the test results at the Tri County Middle School are below federal limits, Tri County Area Schools is taking the following measures to ensure safe drinking water:

1. Providing bottled water for drinking and meal preparation (drinking fountains will not be available for use)
2. Retaining an independent Environmental Engineering firm
3. Working with the MDEQ to identify a plan with a timeline to address this issue
4. Working with MDEQ to evaluate alternative water sources
5. Cooperating with the MDEQ with regard to additional water testing and its investigation

We will keep you updated as we work with MDEQ to resolve this issue. Our priority is the health and safety of our students, staff and community. A frequently asked question document will be provided in the coming weeks. We are looking forward to a great 2018-19 school year; if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact our central office. Thank you for your continued support and partnership!

Sincerely,

Allen Cumings  
Superintendent