



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James S. Alesi

Keeping Kids Safe: Test Drinking Water Fountains For Lead

JAMES S. ALESI

Recent tests in Albany County show unsafe levels of lead, legislation would require annual testing

When I was a Monroe County Legislator in the early 1990's, I asked for a review of all drinking water fountains in schools and other public buildings. While the review did not take place at the time, when I became a State Senator, I began carrying legislation that would require all school districts to test their drinking water fountains annually for lead contamination and report those findings to the public.

Recently, the Albany City School District voluntarily decided to test the water in all of their school buildings. In at least six school buildings, 32 faucets came back with high, unsafe levels of lead in the water. While one would think this problem would only affect older buildings, some of the affected faucets were in buildings that had been renovated.

While I commend the Albany City School District for taking this proactive, voluntary approach to ensuring that the drinking water they are providing students, faculty and staff is safe and healthy, it is time that every school district across the state conduct the same tests on their faucets. While many consider lead paint a more dangerous contaminant for children, each day millions of school children drink from water fountains that contain copper lead pipes in school buildings. It is our responsibility to ensure that the water they drink is not affected by dangerous, high levels of lead.

I will continue to monitor this issue closely as I advocate for passage of this important legislation. We spend so much time educating our children about the importance of drinking water every day. Now we must make sure the water that they do drink is clean, healthy and safe.