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NEWS RELEASE

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District Officials Announce Improved Water Safety Program for LAUSD Schools

Los Angeles – Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) officials today unveiled new improvements in the District's water safety program for all of its schools. Adjustments in the water testing and flushing policies at schools are a result of parents' concerns of lead in the water at Woodlake Elementary School.

"We will ensure from this point forward that all of our employees, especially those at our schools, are aware of this policy and all other policies that deal with the safety of our students," said Superintendent Brewer. "We will begin an aggressive awareness campaign to make sure these safety policies are known; we will expand our training to ensure employees can carry out these policies, and we will tighten up accountability so that ignorance of policies or the failure to carry them out is treated swiftly and effectively."

Brewer has also requested the Office of the Chief Operating Officer conduct an internal investigation to determine whether the policies are being followed.

Improvements in the policies are based upon concerns expressed by Woodlake Elementary School parents and an investigation by KNBC-TV surrounding the District's water flushing policy.

The District will expand its lead testing program. Currently testing of lead in water is only done when there is a complaint or if school site employees raise concerns. Effective immediately, LAUSD will institute a District-wide random testing program to ensure thorough compliance of this and all other safety policies. The Facilities Division is instituting a program that focuses on the fountains in the District. The LAUSD will either install special filters or re-pipe all those fountains.

"The best solution to this would be replacing all of the water pipes in our schools. But that is simply not cost effective. We estimate it would cost more than \$300 million dollars to replace those pipes," said Existing Facilities, Deputy Chief Executive Bruce Kendall. "The District has already spent \$93 million on more than 600 projects throughout the District replacing old water pipes."

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"It is important for parents and the public to understand that the possible failure of our employees to follow these policies did not put any student's health in jeopardy," said Chief Operating Officer David Holmquist. "Testing of water fountains throughout the District confirms that compliance with flushing policy reduces the levels of lead in the water to below the federal standards for safety. These policies were instituted to protect our students and they will be rigorously enforced."

In 1993, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued guidelines for households to flush faucets to reduce the amount of lead in drinking water. Lead in water is not a phenomenon that is limited to just schools. People who reside in homes built before 1989 that has galvanized water pipes, or pipes where lead solder was used, are exposed to lead in their water.

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