

To: Superintendents, Business Managers, and Public Charter School Administrators

From: Salam Noor, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

Re: Reimbursement of Testing for Lead in Water

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is pleased to announce that the Legislature, through its Joint Emergency Board, has approved the reservation (a designated set-aside) of state emergency funds to assist school districts and education service districts (ESDs) in paying for lead testing of their water sources used for drinking, food preparation, and other uses leading to human consumption. Public charter schools, through their sponsoring school districts, will also be eligible to receive support through this funding reservation.

The importance of providing healthy and safe schools where every student can succeed cannot be overstated. This reservation of funding by the Legislature demonstrates the commitment the state has to providing healthy and safe schools. Please read below for details about the funds and how school districts and ESDs may be reimbursed for the cost of testing.

The legislative reservation is for \$5 million. ODE will begin collecting documentation from districts and ESDs that supports eligible costs for reimbursement. The Department will return to the Emergency Board in December to request the funds needed from the reservation to pay for eligible reimbursement claims. Once allocated, this money will then be distributed through ODE to the districts and ESDs to reimburse for the lead testing. Currently, ODE plans to reimburse costs using the following criteria:

- Only testing done on fixtures that are used for food preparation, drinking, and other human consumption will be reimbursed.
- To be eligible for reimbursement, testing must be done by an Oregon Health Authority (OHA)-accredited lab using U.S. Environmental Protection Agency protocols.
- Samples must be submitted to an OHA-accredited lab between March 1, 2016 and December 1, 2016. Samples submitted outside of this date range will be ineligible for reimbursement.
- Districts and ESDs will need to submit to ODE paid invoices from labs showing the cost of tests performed by the lab. Alternative documentation for tests submitted, but not yet completed, can be used to support the estimated cost.
- ALL requests for testing reimbursement will need to be submitted to ODE by December 1, 2016. ODE will aggregate all eligible reimbursement requests to support a funding allocation by the Emergency Board in December.
- The final amount to be reimbursed to school districts and ESDs will depend on the amount of funding made available by the Emergency Board in December and the number of eligible reimbursement claims submitted to ODE.
- Upon funding allocation by the Emergency Board, ODE will process reimbursements to school districts and ESDs in a timely manner.
- The funding allocation will be made available through the Electronic Grant Management System (EGMS) based on the amount of funding allocated for reimbursement.

ODE will provide more detailed guidance to the districts, ESDs and public charter schools in the coming weeks. However, we wanted to provide an overview of this reservation of funding as soon as possible. This also provides districts and ESDs with notice of the documents necessary to support the allocation of funds from the Emergency Board in December.

ODE is grateful to the school districts and ESDs that rose to the challenges in addressing the public health concern of lead in drinking water. Many districts and ESDs have completed testing, with more waiting on their lab results. Districts' willingness to do this work demonstrates their commitment to providing the best physical environment possible for their students. ODE is also grateful that the Legislature is reserving funding to help pay for some of the costs of the tests. This commitment by the Legislature assists in ensuring that all students have equal access to healthy and safe schools to achieve their maximum potential.

Sincerely,

Salam Noor, Ph.D.

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction