Student Name: Immanuel Wolde & Aazmeer Uddin Project Title: *What's in Our Water?* WTN Youth Science Contest – Science Communication Track Reflection Document

#### Audience and Message Development

Our identified audience is teens in our school. We chose this audience because we are personally affected by the cleanliness of water at our school, yet most of us don't even think about where their drinking water comes from or whether or not it's even safe. We tailored the message by using informal, chatty tone, clean graphics, and short blocks of text in order to keep it interesting and readable. We also used bold text and icons to grab attention and make the information accessible to those who may just glance over the infographic. Low-income community students or older school pupils are typically most susceptible because their school buildings may not have been upgraded in years.

The infographic format allowed us to communicate key facts about water contamination clearly and quickly, which works best for busy teens who may not take time to read a full article or research paper.

### **Equity Impact**

This project addresses a significant equity issue. Data from the Washington Tracking Network (WTN) shows that water contamination, especially lead in school drinking water, is a widespread issue in Washington state. By raising awareness among students, especially those who may not be aware of the risk or the resources. Our goal is to promote advocacy and action. All students deserve safe drinking water no matter the zip code or school district. The project empowers young people to speak up and be heard, even if they are not typically included in conversations regarding school safety.

## Health and Social Significance

The problem of lead contamination of school water has serious health and social consequences. Lead is not safe even in minute amounts, especially to the developing minds of children. Lead affects memory, mood, ability to learn, and health many years into the future. These are heavy burdens for students who work hard to excel academically and socially. Many teens assume our school water is clean just because it looks clear. This infographic challenges that assumption by using real WTN data to show how widespread contamination actually is. The social significance lies in starting a conversation. We may not be the ones in charge of school maintenance, but we can be informed and make better choices (like bringing a reusable water bottle, avoiding certain fountains, or asking school staff about water testing).

# **Project Process and Reflection**

We chose the topic after exploring the Washington Tracking Network website and seeing how many schools tested positive for lead in their water. We were surprised to see how common it was and how little it's talked about at school. That pushed us to pick this as our focus.

We created the infographic using Canva since it permitted us to develop a tidy, appealing project that's readable. Our aim was to strike a balance between visual appeal and educational material, and Canva provided us with the means to do so through images, typography, and layout options.

One challenge we ran into was making the data feel relevant. Some people think "lead poisoning" is an issue from decades ago or only in other countries. To solve that, we highlighted the direct effects on teens, for example, like focus issues, fatigue, and headaches—to show this is a problem that can hurt our daily lives now.

We received brainstorming ideas from AI tools like ChatGPT. This helped us structure the infographic effectively, connecting the data to real-life teen experiences. All writing and design were done by us.

# **AI Reflection**

We used Artificial Intelligence (ChatGPT) to:

- Brainstorm infographic structure
- Help identify strong data points from the WTN site

All content was written by **Immanuel Wolde & Aazmeer Uddin**, but Al served as a supportive tool for brainstorming. We stayed within the contest guidelines and have credited the role of Al appropriately.