



# What's in your water?



**A Wake-Up Call for our Schools  
by Immanuel Wolde & Aazmeer Uddin**

**Kids drink it. Kids shower in it.**

**Teenagers in school consume water daily without a second thought. Contaminated water, most commonly containing lead, can cause health issues, especially in vulnerable communities.**

**Clean water is a basic right, but not always a reality.**



**789**

schools have been  
sampled since  
January 2018



**40,085**

samples have been  
collected since  
January 2018



**16.4%**

of samples tested  
above remediation  
threshold of 5 ppb



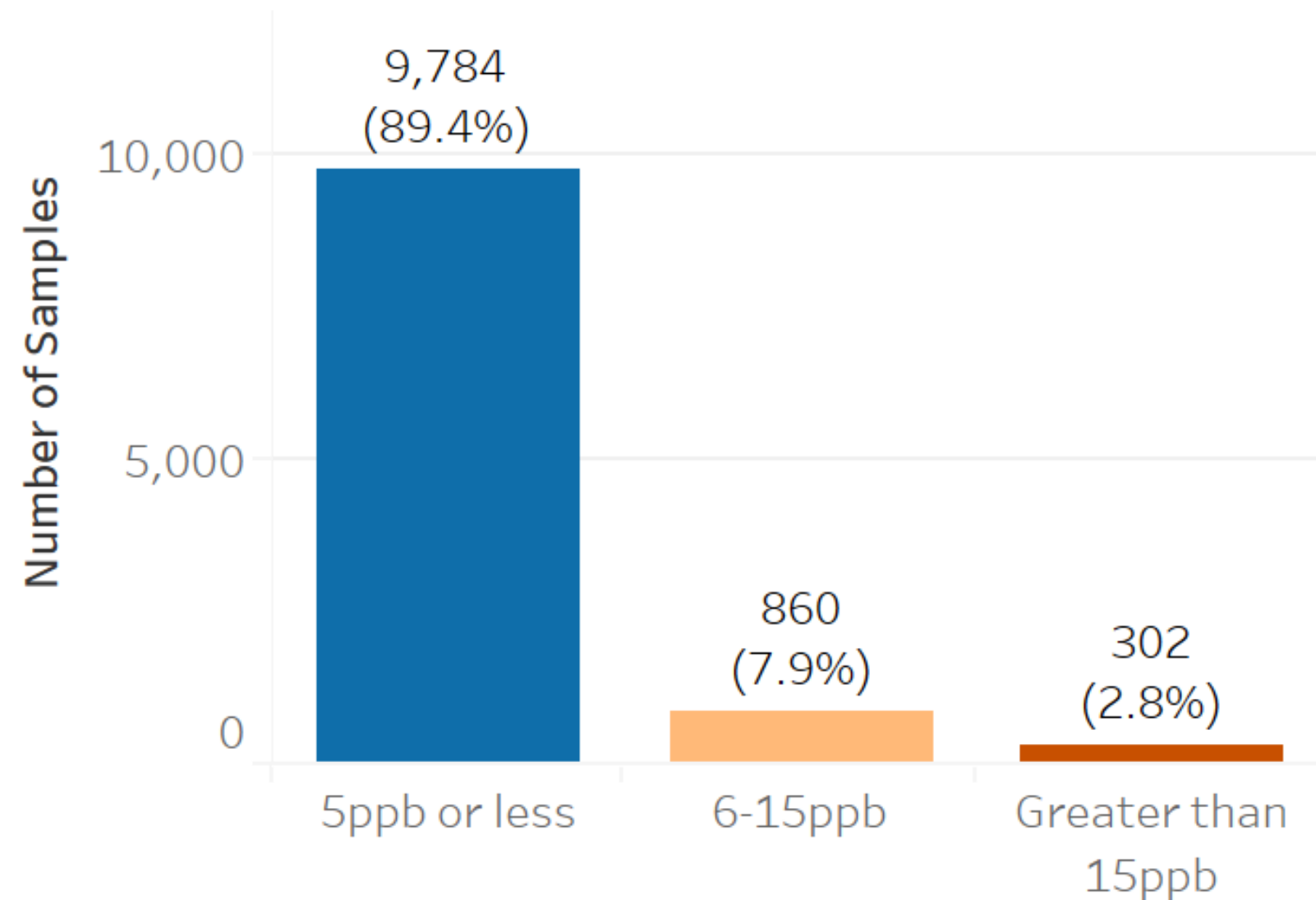
*Lead in school drinking  
water data. Washington  
State Department of  
Health.*

## What are the harms of lead and what amount is considered harmful?

- Kids are most vulnerable to lead exposure's negative impacts because their growing bodies hold onto more lead than adults.
- There must be attempts to minimize exposure risk to a lesser degree, not just in the home but also at schools.
- Lead can enter school drinking water when it migrates from standing water into the pipes.
- New fixtures can also be a source of contamination.
- It's a good idea to test for lead on a regular basis in all structures.

## Lead in School Drinking Water Dashboard - Since 2022

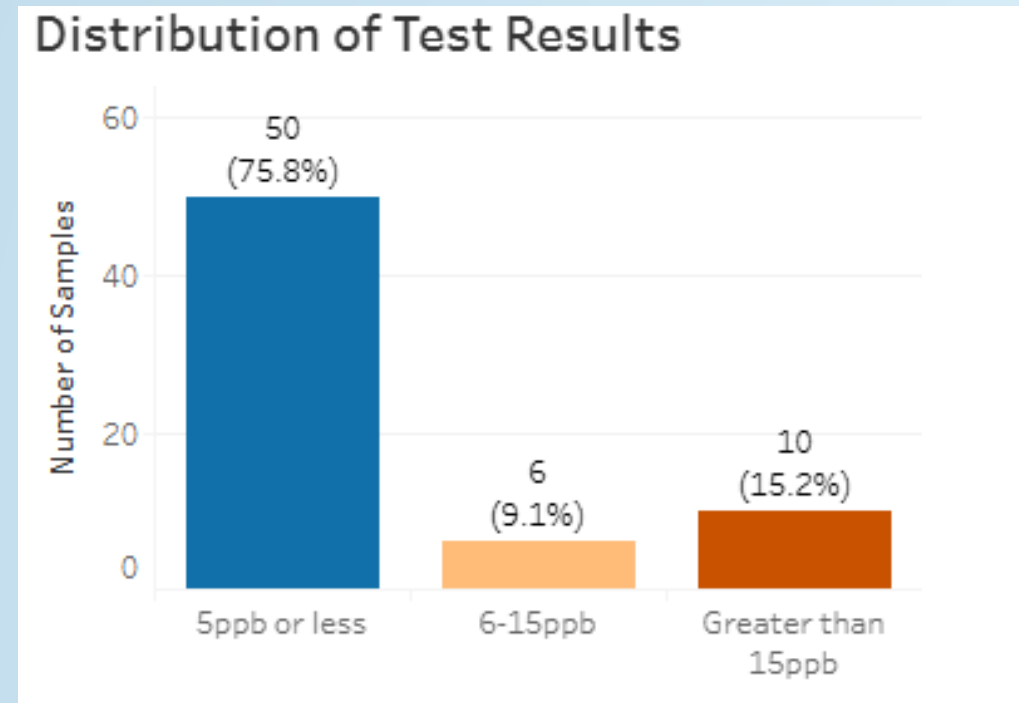
### Distribution of Test Results



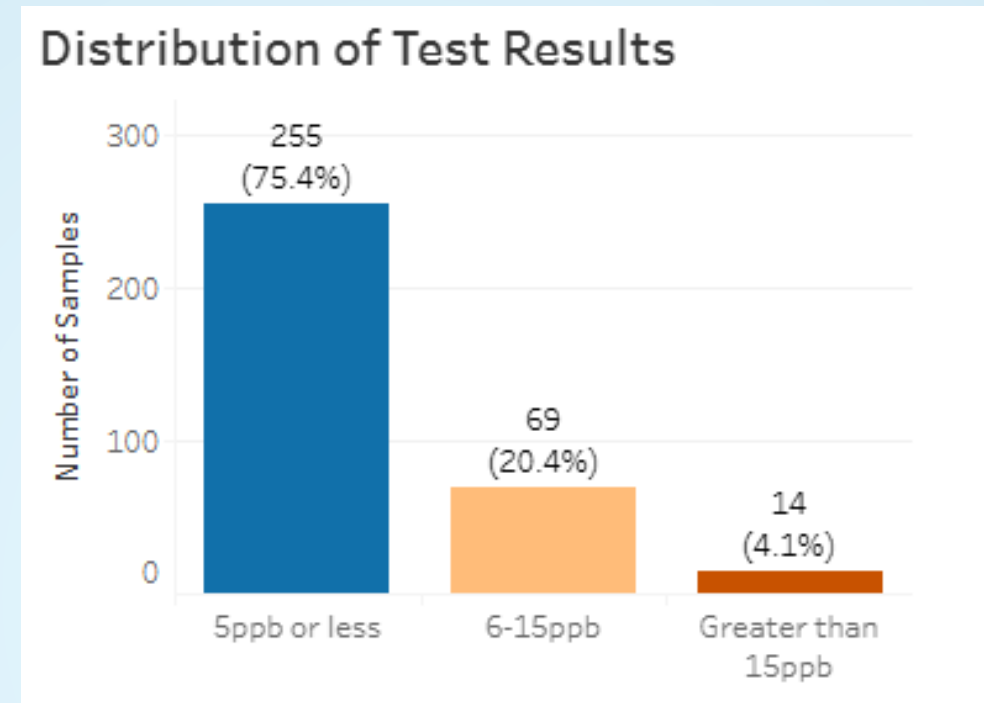
This is the distribution of test results from samples touching on all school districts in Washington. In total **10.7%** of schools water is at a hazardous level. Lead can mess with memory, focus, affect mood, cause headaches, and possibly increase the risk of long-term health issues.



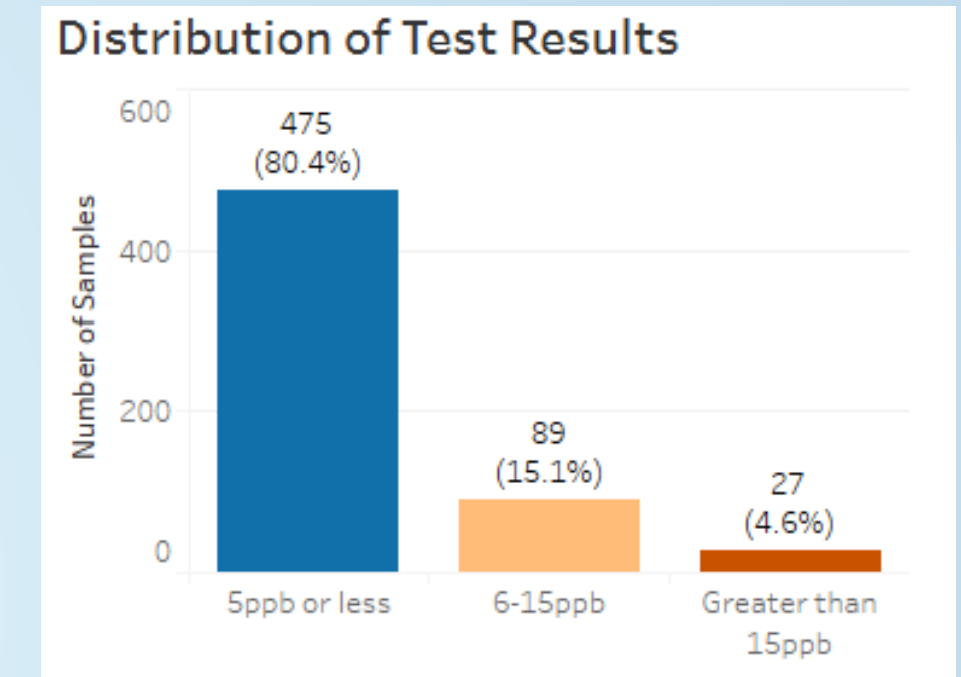
## Lead in School Drinking Water Dashboard - Since 2022



Centrallia



Puyallup



Spokane

Although the statistic on the previous slide shows data of lead measurements in Washington. Centrallia, Puyallup, and Spokane have the highest measurements of lead in the water that is provided at schools, reaching in the 19-24% range meaning that these cities need more awareness and take action sooner for the safety of their kids.

## WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO?

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### Individually

- 💡 Replace or clean faucets/fountains
- 🧪 Regular testing
- 📢 Share results with students and families
- 🚫 Post signs on fountains with unsafe water

### Group

- 💧 Talk to school staff about safe water
- 📋 Spread awareness with this infographic! By making posters or by starting clubs at your School!





## SOURCES



Washington State Department of Health. (2024) Lead in school Drinking water Dashboard - since 2022. Washington State Department of Health. <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/lead-school-drinking-water/dashboard-2022-forward>

Washington State Department of Health. (2024) Drinking water - Washington Tracking Network (WTN). Washington State Department of Health. <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/drinking-water>

Environment America. (n.d.). Lead in the water: What's in your school's drinking water? Retrieved April 15, 2025, from <https://environmentamerica.org/washington/resources/lead-in-the-water/>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.). Basic information about lead in drinking water. Retrieved April 15, 2025, from <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>

The Bellingham Herald. (2019, February 19). Lead found in water at dozens of Whatcom County schools, and it's not required to be removed. Retrieved April 15, 2025, from <https://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/local/article226539945.html>