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EPA Lead Testing in East Trenton, Grant School

TRENTON, NJ: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reached out to the Trenton Public School District in early December requesting to sample soil at two school locations for potential lead contamination and exposure. District officials were informed that pottery factories existed in the early 1900s and substances used to make the pottery contained lead. The EPA also noted that hundreds of homes were being sampled in the East Trenton area. Grant Intermediate School and McKnight Elementary School were placed on the EPA's list based on the areas sampled in East Trenton.

The district granted permission for the EPA to sample soil at both locations on December 27, 28, and 29, 2023. On Jan. 22, 2024, information was shared with the Trenton Board of Education and the community at our monthly Board of Education meeting. At the time, Superintendent James Earle informed the board and the public that the EPA sampled the soil at Grant and McKnight Schools, and the district was waiting for the results.

On Monday, Jan. 29, the district was informed that soil at Grant Intermediate School does contain lead above the normal levels in uncovered areas which included grass and dirt. McKnight Elementary School's levels were within the normal range. At Grant, areas covered by concrete, asphalt (basketball courts), and buildings are not exposed to lead from the surface. This exposure means that the district will restrict access to all outside uncovered surfaces at Grant. The district's buildings and grounds team has begun securing those areas so students, staff, and the community will not have access to play or walk on the surfaces. The district is working with the Grant administration and staff to identify safe areas for students to play outside.

In the next few weeks, the EPA will hold a community meeting at Grant Intermediate School and will meet with staff to share official information about the next steps in remediating the surfaces around the school and answer any questions. The Trenton Public School District will be working in partnership with the city of Trenton, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Trenton Health Department to coordinate opportunities for staff and students to be tested if families are interested. Information regarding testing and any additional procedures or protocols will be communicated in the near future.

The district thanks the staff, families, and the community in advance for their patience as we work with the EPA and the city to ensure a safe school environment for our students and staff.

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