

## **Testimony in Support of HB 4340, 4341, 4342**

An Act to Provide Filtered Drinking Water Stations for Lead in Schools and Childcare Centers in Michigan, to the House Committee on Health Policy.

**Submitted by:** Abigail Dumes, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Women's and Gender Studies, University of Michigan

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Dear Chair Rogers, Majority Vice Chair Whitsett, Minority Vice Chair VanderWall and Committee Members,

My name is Abigail Dumes. I am a medical anthropologist and an assistant professor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Michigan. I am also a parent of two children who attend Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS). AAPS first began to test its water for lead in 2016. It began with a small sample of 17 kitchen sinks and 1-2 drinking/cooking sources in each district building. Most sources tested at that time were non-detect for lead, and none of the buildings had water sources with lead content over 15 ppb, which is the EPA's action level. In fact, on May 26, 2016, MLive published an article titled, "Tests show no need for concern in AAPS water."

Before my son began kindergarten in the fall of 2017, I reached out to AAPS about information regarding its water testing process. I was not made aware of the district's 2017 results until the following fall in 2018. During the 2017 testing cycle, more sources in each school were tested, and the results, while posted to the AAPS website, were not emailed to the AAPS community and did not have news coverage. I was concerned when I saw the 2017 results, because unlike those from 2016, the 2017 results showed much higher levels of lead across the district. Every building tested, with the exception of one school, had detectable

levels of lead, and 39% of the buildings had at least one drinking water source above 15 ppb. 79% of the buildings tested had at least one source above 5 ppb, which became the district's new action level in October 2018. The highest detected level was 320 ppb at an elementary school. As you likely know, 15 ppb and 5 pbb are not health standards. There is scientific consensus that there is no safe level of lead exposure, which is why the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that the lead concentration in school water fountains not exceed 1ppb.

Beginning in 20019, AAPS transitioned to installing filters in all of its water sources used for drinking and cooking. Because lead release in water is sporadic, because irregular water use in schools reduces the effectiveness of corrosion control, and because plumbing may still legally have up to .25% lead by weight, I learned through our advocacy efforts that the most cost effective and health protective way to safeguard schools and daycare facilities from lead in their water is to provide filtered water. I am here today in support of HB 4340, 4341, and 4342 because children, students, and staff deserve to have immediate access to lead-free water when they're at school and daycare. HB 4340, 4341, and 4342 would provide the funding and guidance to keep children safe from lead in their drinking water. I am grateful that AAPS students and staff now have access to safe drinking water at school, but every child in Michigan deserves to have this same access. I hope that this example serves as a cautionary tale of the risks of a testing model and why, to ensure that all children in Michigan have the same protection, HB 4340, 4341, 4342 are so urgently important. Thank you!