

November 2005

DOH PUB. #331-326

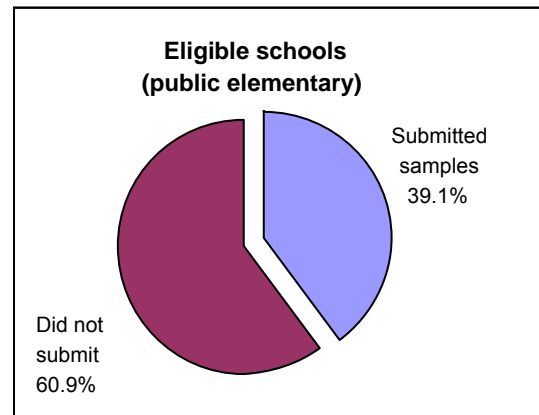
## Fact Sheet

# School lead testing results from 2005 grant program

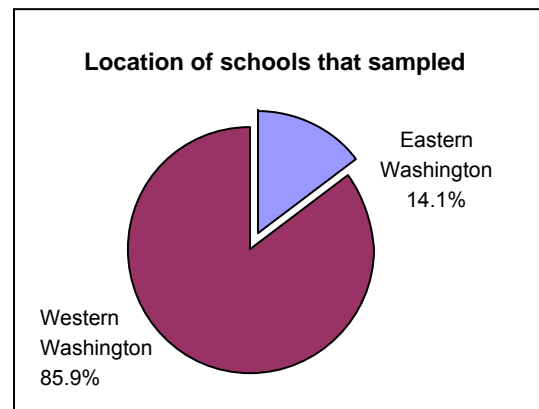
From December 2004 until June 2005, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Department of Health (DOH) jointly implemented a grant program to partially reimburse Washington public elementary schools for the cost of initial testing for lead in their drinking water. Follow-up tests and remediation were not covered under this grant. Information regarding grant availability was sent directly to eligible schools, posted on OSPI and DOH's websites, and provided in several presentations to school administrators and maintenance personnel.

No school was required to perform the tests; however, if they chose to test they were required to submit their sample results to DOH to qualify for reimbursement. A total of \$750,000 was originally allocated to cover the anticipated costs of testing samples taken between September 1, 2003 and June 30, 2005. Of this amount, \$117,440 was actually spent. The funding source was a combination of federal funds from DOH and state funds from the Department of Ecology.

A total of 7,728 samples were submitted by 455 different schools. OSPI reports that 1,163 public elementary schools met the eligibility criteria for the grant. Therefore, 39.1 percent of eligible schools took advantage of the grant opportunity (455/1,163).



Of the 455 schools that sampled, 14.1 percent (64/455) are in Eastern Washington and 85.9 percent (391/455) are in Western Washington.

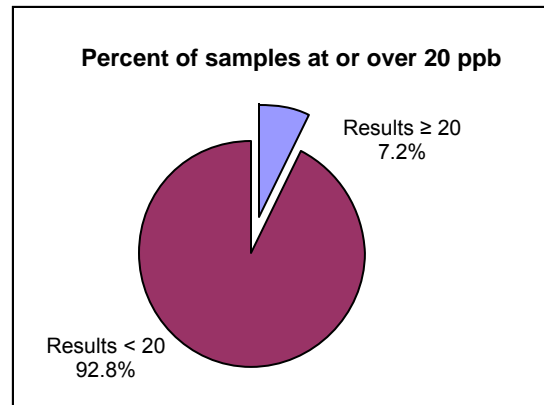


OSPI reports that 302 of eligible schools are in Eastern Washington and 861 are in Western Washington. Therefore, proportionately more Western Washington schools (45 percent of eligible schools) participated than Eastern Washington schools (21 percent of eligible schools).

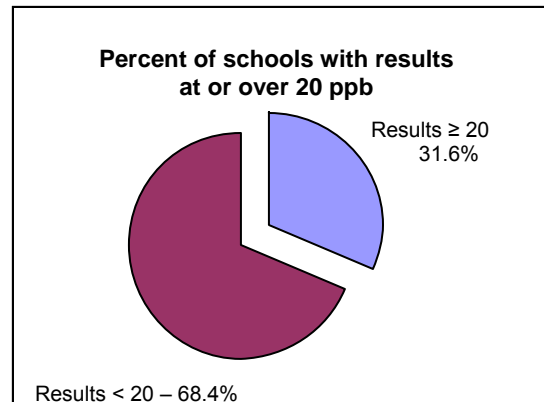


HELPING TO ENSURE SAFE AND RELIABLE DRINKING WATER

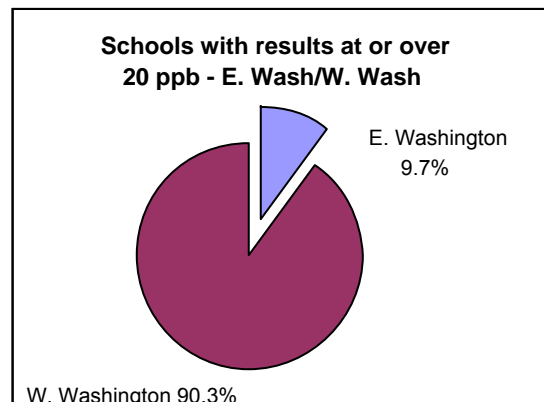
Of 7,728 samples collected, 559 or 7.2 percent were at or above 20 parts per billion (ppb) for lead. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends action when the lead concentration at a specific outlet within a school is more than 20 ppb.



These 559 samples were collected by 144 individual schools, so 31.6 percent (144/455) of participating schools had at least one sample at or above 20 ppb.



Of schools with samples at or above 20 ppb, 9.7 percent (14/144) were in Eastern Washington and 90.3 percent (130/144) were in Western Washington.



The Department of Health's Office of Drinking Water (ODW) provided technical assistance as part of this project, and continues to field questions about lead and other contaminants from schools and school districts. When schools asked ODW what to do if they had samples at or above 20 ppb, they were told to take follow-up or flush samples from each location that exceeded 20 ppb. Flush tests involve allowing the faucet or fixture being tested to run for about 30 seconds before the sample is collected.

The information from the flush test and the initial, or first-draw, test helped identify whether the lead contamination was coming from the faucet or the plumbing behind the faucet. Beyond testing, ODW advised schools or school districts wanting to address problem areas to consult with an engineer or engineering firm familiar with these types of problems.

### **For more information:**

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