

TESTIMONY OF TODD J. COCHRAN
PARENT AND PTSO VICE PRESIDENT, CAPITOL HILL MONTESSORI AT LOGAN
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April 14, 2016

My name is Todd Cochran, and I am a parent of two first-graders and a PK3 child at Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan. In addition, I am the vice president of our PTSO and a Ward 6 resident. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee today.

Other parents from my school testifying today are going to talk about the unfortunate and incorrect decision by the Mayor to completely omit our school from the CIP, despite our school originally being slated for a modernization in 2014 to remedy a host of dangerous, uncomfortable, and decrepit conditions impacting our children, staff, and community. But, I'm here to talk about something a bit more targeted -- my three year old son's water bottle.

Yester my son

He takes his little pirate water bottle to school every day. He loves it. The problem is we found out last week that the water he has been drinking every school day was tested in August 2015 and found to contain an illegal level of lead. But DGS did not tell us it discovered an unacceptable level of lead in the water for seven months, so who knows how long my son had been drinking this water? And DGS has not provided data to show the issue has been remediated.

I recognize and appreciate the Chairman's statement this morning to test all water sources in our school today? And I know DGS was there.

But as things stand we still have a problem.

In August 2015, DGS tested 18 (out of our approximately 50) water sources at our school, and 5 came back above the federal limit for lead. In fact, one water fountain -- right by my child's classroom where he filled his little pirate water bottle every day -- was more than 20 times the federal limit. Those seven months passed with no notification to our community. Once we discovered the results and contacted the Department of Energy and Environment, those results disappeared from the website within two hours and were replaced by test results from March 2016. The new results showed that all of our tested water sources passed.

Great, right? No. The new data was faulty and unclear. Only 4 water sources from August 2015 were tested in March 2016, AND none of the 5 unsafe sources from August were re-tested. You know, including the one where my three-year old fills his little pirate water bottle.

I have attached to my testimony the provided data. Neither I nor anyone else from our school community can be absolutely certain it is safe for anybody in our school to drink. I have told my children to not drink from the water fountains until I tell them it is ok, and in fact, we disabled the fountains because we cannot be sure they are safe. Our parents and PTSO have been bringing in bottled water in the meantime, and a local Giant has donated bottled water to our school as well.

And let's not forget that not all potable water sources in our school have even been tested. Our kids use the sinks in their classrooms to wash and prepare fruits and vegetables, clean their classrooms, and engage in other Montessori-taught "life skills" like measuring. Our kids use water sources to cultivate our school garden and then harvest the food they grow to cook meals at school. We cannot responsibly use these water sources until we know they are safe for our children, and we are preparing to divert PTSO funds from other projects to hire an independent tester because we do not trust DGS to provide safe, lead-free water for our children. We need to know when DGS will test all of our water sources and prove to us they are safe.

Finally, this ineptitude and oversights are surely indicative of the broader problems facing our school community and building. If DCPS and DGS did not notify us of the significant lead problem at our school, what other problems are undiscovered and/or uncommunicated to us? Our school desperately needs a modernization, and the Council should amend the CIP to provide one for us.

In the meantime, would you like a drink from my son's little pirate water bottle?
Probably not.

Thank you for your time.

Attachment A

The following is an excerpt of lead test results from the Department of Energy & Environment website at <http://doee.dc.gov/publication/water-sampling-results-district-schools>.

This data reflects lead test results for Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan for testing done in August 2015 and March 2016

August 20, 2015	Pass	Fail
First Floor Hallway Adjacent to Rm 109	<1	
First Floor Hallway Adjacent to Rm 109	<1	
Second Floor Hallway Adjacent to Rm 212	<1	
Second Floor Hallway Adjacent to Rm 212	<1	
Second Floor Hallway Adjacent to Rm 202 (high)	<1	
Second Floor Hallway Adjacent to Rm 202 (low)	1.5	
Second Floor Hallway Adjacent to Rm 202 (low)	<1	
Second Floor Hallway Adjacent to Rm 202 (low)	2.2	
First Floor Hallway Adjacent to Rm 101	<1	
First Floor Hallway Adjacent to Rm 101	<1	
First Floor Hallway Between restrooms (left)		15
First Floor Hallway Between restrooms (left)		15
First Floor Hallway Between restrooms (middle)		16
First Floor Hallway Between restrooms (middle)		13
First Floor Hallway Between restrooms (right)		320
First Floor Hallway Between restrooms (right)	9.7	
First Floor inside cafeteria	<1	
First Floor inside cafeteria	4	
March 28, 2016		
	Pass	Fail
1st floor hallway adjacent to Classroom 109	< 1	
1st floor hallway adjacent to Classroom 109	< 1	
1st floor hallway adjacent to Classroom 101	< 1	
1st floor hallway adjacent to Classroom 101	< 1	
Basement floor inside Cafeteria	< 1	
Basement floor inside Cafeteria	< 1	
1st floor hallway in Annex Building adjacent to Women's room (left, high)	< 1	
1st floor hallway in Annex Building adjacent to Women's room (left, high)	< 1	
1st floor hallway in Annex Building adjacent to Women's room (middle, low)	< 1	
1st floor hallway in Annex Building adjacent to Women's room (middle, low)	< 1	
1st floor hallway in Annex Building adjacent to Women's room (right, high)	< 1	
1st floor hallway in Annex Building adjacent to Women's room (right, high)	< 1	

Attachment B



April 6, 2016

Charlie Ellis
Giant Food
300 H Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Ellis,

Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan Parent Teacher Student Organization (CHML PTSO) is requesting a donation of water jugs or alternatively bottled water for our school community.

The PTSO works to support parents, teachers, and students so that our students can have the best education and reach their fullest potential. The PTSO has recently become aware of lead test results that exceeded the federal legal limit. While these issues are resolved, the PTSO is working to provide our students with clean water and need community support like yours to be able to provide safe drinking water to our students. We will provide this water to our classrooms so that students can have safe water to drink during the school day.

We would greatly appreciate your support in this effort. Feel free to contact me with any questions at 202-441-4527 or president@capitolhillmontessorischool.org.

The CHML PTSO is a 501(c)(3) organization (Federal Tax ID is 45-2572298) and your company's donation is tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Erika Hoppes
President
CHML PTSO