



## News Release



Aug. 18, 2016

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Health Department, Schools Notify Parents, Offer Free Testing After Lead Hazards Found on School Exterior

FAYETTEVILLE – The Department of Public Health and Cumberland County Schools are working together to ensure the safety of students and staff at William H. Owen Elementary School after an environmental study found lead hazards in areas accessible to children attending the facility at 4533 Raeford Road.

Parents of students at the school will receive a letter from Cumberland County Public Health Director Buck Wilson and Schools Superintendent Dr. Frank Till notifying them of the lead investigation, which detected hazards primarily on the exterior of the school. The primary route for lead entering the blood of children under 6 years of age is through ingestion of lead-contaminated dust occurring from hand to mouth activity.

Following Health Department recommendations, the school system has implemented measures to remove the lead hazards. The work should be completed prior to students starting the new school year on Aug. 29.

No lead hazards were found in any of the classrooms, and water samples collected did not show any lead levels.

At this time, no student or staff is known to have elevated blood levels; however, the Health Department will offer free blood lead testing at the school on Sept. 12 for students and staff. Free testing will also be provided at the Cumberland County Public Health Center, 1225 Ramsey Street. No appointment is necessary. The hours are Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m., with extended hours every Tuesday until 7 p.m.

Parents who have any questions or concerns about the health effects or the blood test for lead may contact Sandra Shipley, Cumberland County Health Lead Nurse, at (910) 433-3689.

The letter to parents is attached.



**CUMBERLAND**  
★ **COUNTY** ★  
NORTH CAROLINA

August 16, 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Cumberland County Schools makes the safety of its students and staff the top priority in all aspects of its operations. Recently, the Cumberland County Department of Public Health conducted an environmental lead investigation at William H. Owen Elementary School located at 4533 Raeford Road, Fayetteville, NC 28304. The investigation revealed the presence of lead hazards in areas accessible to children attending the facility. On the advice of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health, the school system has implemented measures to eliminate student and staff exposure and access to areas where the lead hazards were found while work to eradicate lead hazards is completed. The scope of work should be completed prior to the students returning for the school year 2016-2017.

The lead hazards were found primarily on the exterior of the facility. No lead hazards were found/detected in any of the classrooms at William H. Owen Elementary School. Water samples collected did not show any lead levels. Based on these findings, Cumberland County Department of Public Health has given clearance for William H. Owen Elementary School to receive students on August 29, 2016. The primary route of lead entering the blood for children that are under age six is through the ingestion of lead-contaminated dust that occurs by hand to mouth activity.

At this time, no student or staff is known to have elevated blood levels; however, the Cumberland County Department of Public Health will offer free blood lead testing at William H. Owen Elementary School on September 12, 2016, for students and staff. Testing is also offered Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. with extended hours every Tuesday until 7:00 p.m. at the Cumberland County Department of Public Health.

If you have any questions or concerns about the health effects or about the blood test for lead, please contact Sandra Shipley, Cumberland County Health Lead Nurse, at [\(910\) 433-3689](tel:9104333689). If you have any questions about the information in this letter, please contact Daniel Ortiz at [\(910\) 433-3618](tel:9104333618) or by email at [dortiz@co.cumberland.nc.us](mailto:dortiz@co.cumberland.nc.us).

Sincerely,

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Public Health Director  
Cumberland County Department of Public Health  
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Dr. Frank Till, Jr.  
Superintendent  
Cumberland County Schools  
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Cc: Kimly Blount, REHS  
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Gemette McEachern  
William H. Owen Elementary School  
Cumberland County Schools  
Principal

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