



NEW JERSEY SENATE

SENATE CHAMBERS

P.O. Box 099

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0099

March 15, 2016

Honorable David C. Hespe, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
100 River View Plaza
P.O. Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Commissioner Hespe:

We write today as legislators who have long been concerned with education and public health issues in New Jersey. We have all watched closely as schools in New Jersey have recently discovered elevated levels of lead in their drinking water. Lead is a dangerous substance, and it is particularly harmful to school-aged children.

New Jersey has strong laws to ensure clean drinking water. However, when 30 school buildings in Newark alone are found to have elevated levels of lead in the schools' drinking water, it is time to acknowledge that we have a potential public health crisis in our schools. There are steps that must be taken—now—to ensure that our school children are protected from lead poisoning, and to provide their parents with the public health information that they need to make informed decisions to protect their children.

Yesterday we introduced Senate Bill 2022. It is a straightforward, common sense bill that requires immediate action to ensure that our school children are protected from lead in the drinking water. We ask that you do not wait for enactment of this bill. We ask that you proactively require every public school in this state to take the following basic steps:

- Immediately test the drinking water in every public school for the presence of lead;
- Notify the parents or guardians of children attending each school of the test results at that school; and
- If a school finds elevated levels of lead in the drinking water, take immediate steps to provide an alternate drinking water supply.

Thank you for your swift response to this letter. We stand ready to assist you in this endeavor in whatever way we can.

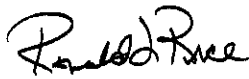
Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sweeney".

Stephen M. Sweeney
Senator, District 3

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Teresa Ruiz".

M. Teresa Ruiz
Senator, District 29

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald L. Rice".

Ronald L. Rice
Senator, District 28