

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES



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John Stokes -- Interim Associate Director, External Affairs
202-288-7275

Donna Harris -- Public Relations Specialist
202-578-4494

**Independent Lab Validates ‘No-Detection’ of Lead on Janney Elementary
School Playground**
Bowser Administration Takes Immediate Action on Learning Samples Taken in February

Statement from Keith A. Anderson, Director - Department of General Services:

“Sustaining safe and healthy conditions at each District property is the mission and top priority of the Department of General Services (DGS). Of primary concern at DGS are the city’s most vulnerable population – our children. Within 24 hours of notification of a concern raised about the Janney Elementary playground, DGS took immediate action. An independent lab has conducted three tests which have returned negative for the detection of lead at the Janney Elementary playground. DGS requests residents submit timely reporting of safety related concerns and remains fully committed to the highest level of safety at all of its facilities.”

Background Information:

On May 2, 2019, DGS was notified about tests results suggesting elevated levels of lead at the Janney Elementary School playground. These results, conducted by the Ecology Center, were from samples taken from the playground in February 2019. Upon notification, DGS took immediate action and conduct its own initial test results within 24 hours. DGS also took further steps by conducting two additional test rounds – one of them mirroring the same type of test performed by the Ecology Center. DGS conducted a three-pronged analysis out of an abundance of caution and to maintain the safety of those using the District’s playground.

- Test #1 - On May 2, 2019, DGS immediately dispatched an industrial hygienist to the Janney Elementary School playground to perform X-ray fluorescence (XRF) testing after receiving a claim on the same day, of elevated levels of lead. XRF tests show an immediate presence of metals and these tests were performed on three areas of the playground and three areas of the adjacent soccer field. **The results of XRF testing returned negative for the presence of lead.** For a more comprehensive analysis, bulk samples of the playground and soccer fields

The Department of General Services is responsible for building, maintaining and sustaining more than 191 million square feet of space for the District of Columbia. By partnering with eco-conscious companies to create safe, state-of-the-art facilities, including modern green spaces, we have and continue to develop a sustainable living and working environment for our residents.

were retrieved at levels of up to 2” below the surfaces at the playground and soccer field sites and were driven to EMSL Analytical, Incorporated -- a third-party laboratory in Cinnaminson, New Jersey – for flame atomic absorption tests and for Inductively Coupled Plasma – Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS) testing.

- **Test #2 - Atomic absorption tests on both washed and unwashed samples returned negative to DGS on May 7, 2019, for the presence of lead and showed specifically less than 40 parts per million (40ppm).** By comparison, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) asserts 400ppm as a safe standard for lead in play areas and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) sets a standard of 90ppm for children’s toys.
- **Test #3 - An ICP-MS – which has greater speed, precision and sensitivity as it detects most of the periodic table of elements at the milligram to nanogram levels per liter, were returned to DGS on May 9, 2019, and were found not to contain detectable levels of lead, specifically all below 15ppm, from the DGS-guided analysis.** This is the identical test performed by the Ecology Center. The final report can be found [here](#).

Based on this comprehensive analysis, DGS is confident in the science presented after the agency conducted three rounds of lead testing at the Janney playground and adjacent soccer field which reveal no presence of lead, thus posing no harm to users.

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