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The Portland Observer 46

'City of Roses'



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PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON JR./THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

All drinking fountains in Portland Public Schools have been covered or made inoperable and water dispensers have been made available at every building for the start of school to ensure that all students and staff have safe drinking water.

**A safe water
promise as
classes begin**

BY CERVANTE POPE
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland Public Schools opened the new school year Monday with an emphasis on fixing the lead found in drinking fountains and water taps across the district and providing clean water dispensers in every school to avoid infecting students.

A video posted to the PPS Communication Youtube page features Senior Director of Facilities and Asset Management David Hobbs detailing the plans as school officials journey to install permanent solutions.

Earlier this year, information snow-

Fixing the Taps

ballled to the public in regards to hidden issues on the presence of lead in PPS water faucets, leaving parents and children alike with elevated concern. Two main factors

of their concern involve the water students and staff consume through drinking fountains and food.

Since all drinking fountains in PPS

buildings are shut down, about 1,000 water jug systems will be available for use with paper cup dispensers, Hobbs says in the video.

The paper cups will create will create some waste because they are not recyclable due to a wax lining, according to PPS spokesperson Courtney Westling. But students can bring reusable water bottles to use as an alternative to the disposable cups.

The big empty water jugs will be recycled through the district's water vendor Earth2O, and not by PPS directly, Westling says. Students are encouraged to ask for custodian and other building staff's aid in switching the jugs out whenever they are empty.

Safe water usage in school kitchens was the next issue to tackle, leading PPS to continue a policy it started before the start of summer vacation, using prewashed food

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