
letters



Get the lead out of our schools

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In her last newsletter, Assemblymember Karen McMahan noted that her work in Albany secured \$20,000 for water bottle filling stations for the Starpoint Central School District. Being able to fill their own personal bottles and not pay for the bottled water from their vending machines, it will eliminate the daily cost to the family and likely provide a safer water source than the one that's sat in plastic for months. This should be something that the school districts in Amherst should also pursue.

This reminded me of legislation that has been in limbo since the state Assembly and Senate passed the bill in June. The bill (A160B/S2122) dealt with the safety and testing of potable water in school buildings. Lead is still an issue in buildings older than 1980. Even if there are no lead pipes in the building or in the community supply lines, lead from older joint solders taints the water and is often part of the older water taps and fountains. No amount of lead contamination is considered safe for developing children. Yet the federal allowable levels have been stuck at 0.015 milligrams per liter (mg/L) since they were first proposed in 1986. McMahan was a co-sponsor on the state bill that would reduce the level to 0.005 mg/L, which would be a huge step in the right direction. Children spend about 1,000 hours a year in schools. This bill would be a huge step in eliminating an avoidable developmental hazard, as lead exposure, even at low levels, leads to behavioral issues such as inattentiveness, hyperactivity and irritability. Higher levels lead to learning issues and delayed growth.

According to the [nysenate.gov](https://www.nysenate.gov) website, this bill was never delivered to the governor for a signature. It's time for Gov. Hochul to ask for the bill so she can sign it into law – for the welfare of our children.

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