



PARENTS MAKING WAVES

A Toolkit for Promoting Drinking Water in Schools

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Acknowledgments

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Additional support provided by Anna Grummon and Ariana Oliva.

The authors would like to thank those who provided input on this toolkit: Claire Brindis, Natasha Chavez, Julian Ponce, and the parents of YES Nature to Neighborhoods, the Central American Resource Center of Northern California (CARECEN), and Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco.

This toolkit was created by University of California, San Francisco, California Food Policy Advocates, and Enigami Ventures with support from the San Francisco Foundation. Research reported in this toolkit was also supported in part by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of the National Institutes of Health under award number 5K23HD067305-05. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

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Advocacy 101 Tip Sheet

Advocacy is asking for something and making it happen through actions and effort. Keep your request simple. The changes you want should be clear and achievable.



Serving on a committee at your child's school is one way to advocate for improved water access.

Parent Leaders are Important

Parents can make a difference in how their children learn and play and what their children eat and drink during the school day and at home. By volunteering in the classroom, cafeteria, or schoolyard, parent leaders can take action to improve access to free, safe drinking water throughout the school day.

There are lots of ways to advocate for change at your school. Examples include joining the school wellness council, meeting with the principal, food service director or superintendent, or speaking at a school board meeting. Based on the California Education Code Section 51101, parents of students in public schools have the following rights, with advance notice to the school:

- Observation of the classroom
- Service as a volunteer
- Assurance that children have a safe school environment
- Examination of school curricula
- Service on school councils and committees

Examples of the “something” that you ask for include:

- Water bottle filling water station with cups for the cafeteria
- Written policy to promote water access throughout the school day



Weak water pressure and trash or rust around the basin may discourage students from drinking from a water fountain. Note these unappealing characteristics when you conduct a needs assessment and draw them to the attention of your school administrators.

Examples of Needs Assessments:

- Conduct a survey of drinking water sources on campus
- Observe what beverages students drink at lunchtime
- Interview students, parents, and school staff about water access at school

To advocate for improved drinking water access at your school, follow these steps:

Identify the Problem and Find Solutions

Before you make a request, conduct a needs assessment to find out about any challenges that may prevent students from drinking enough water at school. Once you identify any problems, brainstorm solutions and seek input from different stakeholders. Community agencies, the PTA, school wellness councils, and other local schools or districts may have ideas about how to develop your water program and sustain the program over time.

Gain the Support of School Administrators and Staff

Now that you have identified the problem and some solutions, it is time to share your findings with key decision-makers. Reach out to your school principal or district level administrators to discuss your request. When preparing for your meeting, remember to:

- **Put your request in writing.** Send a letter or email to schedule a meeting about your issue. A good letter is concise and includes personal stories. Don't forget to tell your recipient how to respond to you.
- **Ask for an appointment.** Show your strength in numbers – go with a group of 3 to 4 people and share the responsibility for presenting the issue.

Examples of Key Stakeholders:

- Principal
- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- Wellness coordinator or nurse
- Food service staff
- Maintenance staff

- **Present evidence of the problem.** Share the results of your needs assessment. Provide a real-life example of the lack of drinking water access for students. Bring photos.
- **Be clear about what you want.** Explain your “ask” in a sentence or two. Leave behind concise written materials summarizing your proposal.
- **Follow-up after the meeting.** Write a thank you letter or email. This summarizes your discussion, including any commitments, and creates a paper trail for the future.



Consider providing testimony at a school board meeting or budget hearing about water access at your child’s school.

Engage Public Officials on Your Issue

Connect with the school board, superintendent, and other public officials who have the authority to make change by sending a letter or email, making a phone call, or attending or speaking in a public forum. Providing public testimony at a school board meeting or budget hearing can also be an important way to provide your input. But you don’t always have to give a public statement -- just attending a public hearing to show your support can make a big difference.

Speaking at a Public Hearing

- Prepare 1 to 3 important points that you can cover in 3 minutes
- State why the public official should care about your opinion
- Share a personal story
- Ask for something the public official has the power to do



Working with Resistance

Principals, food services staff, and other school personnel are bound by district guidelines, have to balance the demands of competing interest groups, and face budget constraints. It is important for you to emphasize:

- The laws or policies that support your request
- Evidence of the problem
- A clear and specific “ask”
- Your network of supporters
- Funding you have or hope to secure



Before you participate in any interviews with the media, prepare by developing simple talking points and researching the reporter's beat.

Work with the Media to Publicize Your Advocacy Efforts

The media can help raise the public's awareness of the issue, thereby garnering a school official's support. To engage the media, you can write a letter to the editor, participate in an interview, or provide information to a reporter. When interacting with the media, consider the following:

- **Know your reporter's beat.** Before you speak with a reporter, do some background research on the types of articles he/she typically writes and if he/she tends to favor one side of the debate over another.
- **Know what stories inspire the media.** Frame your story so that the emphasis is on the problem and your unique approach to solving it. Remember the media loves inspirational stories.
- **When talking to reporters, keep it simple.** Describe your story briefly in basic terms that anyone could understand.
- **Use sound bites.** Don't expect the media to tell your whole story. Sound bites are short concise sentences that get to the heart of the issue.
- **Make it easy.** Get permission in advance for a reporter to conduct interviews or to film at your school and line up the principal, teacher, or students (with parental permission) for an interview. Respect the reporter's deadline; if you miss it, you lose your chance to tell your story.
- **Follow up.** Be sure to get the reporter's contact information and follow-up with a brief email to say "Thanks and feel free to call me if you have any additional questions."



How to Fund Your School Water Program

Funding is critical to the success of your program. Identify potential funders who have similar interests to yours. Develop a clear and compelling pitch that anticipates your funders' concerns.

Search Funder Databases

Online foundation databases contain rich information including funding priorities for each foundation and lists of past grantees. Some online databases such as Foundation Center require a paid monthly subscription, while others like Noza and GuideStar allow you to access some information for free.

Asking for funding can seem like a daunting task. Following these steps can help you be successful:

- 1. Be clear about what type of support you need.**
(e.g., a meeting space, money for a new water source, in-kind donations for prizes, etc).
- 2. Have a compelling pitch for your project.** Tell your story and highlight why there is a need for improvement.
- 3. Select funders whose interests align with yours.** Explain how your project can support their mission and goals.
- 4. Anticipate the potential concerns of funders.** Describe how you plan to sustain the program. Explain how you will measure the success of the program over time.



You can ask funders for money or for in-kind support, such as reusable water bottles to be distributed as prizes in a raffle.

When thinking about potential funding sources, think BIG. Funding can come from:

School-Based Sources

School/District Financial Planning and General Fund – Talk to your school principal or secretary to learn more about school or district-level funding opportunities

School Nutrition Services – Speak with your school cafeteria staff or manager or district food service director about the nonprofit school food service account and other funding

Parent and Student Groups – Work with groups such as the PTA and the Student Business Association to find funding

Healthy School Fundraisers – Sell items that promote health such as reusable water bottles or rubber bracelets for a cause. You can also organize auctions where guests bid on donated items or host parties with entry fees

Community Sources

Local Government (e.g., public health department)

Nonprofit Organizations (e.g., American Heart Association)

Community-Based Groups (e.g., Rotary Club, Kiwanis, Boy Scouts, religious groups)

Corporations and Local Businesses (e.g., Target)

Foundations (e.g., The San Francisco Foundation)

Crowdfunding

A method of raising small amounts of money from a large number of people, generally online. Some online crowdfunding platforms have fees associated with them, while others do not. Do some research to find the best site for your project. Start by checking out: CrowdRise.com, Kickstarter.com, GoFundMe.com, YouCaring.com

For more ideas about how to host healthy fundraisers at your school, see:

PEACHSF (Parents Educators & Advocates Connection for Healthy School Food), How to Fundraise for Your School without Selling Food, <http://bit.ly/1g7yZXh>



Community groups like the Rotary Club are one potential source of funding for your school's water program.



Ensure School Water is Safe

Before you can promote water consumption at your school, you need to make sure the water is safe for students to drink.



The Environmental Protection Agency has many resources related to the safety of school drinking water

Follow these steps to check the safety of water at your school:

1. **Get a copy of your school's Consumer Confidence Report (CCR).** These reports are mailed out annually and list any contaminants found in the local drinking water where your school is located. There are a few ways you can track down your school's CCR:
 - Ask your school administrators for a copy of this report.
 - Contact the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Hotline at 1-800-426-4791. They can help you connect with your school's water supplier, from whom you can request a copy of the CCR.
 - Contact your school's water supplier directly to request a copy of the CCR. Find your local water supplier's contact information using this statewide list of suppliers. <http://bit.ly/1VuEvTD>



To test your school's water for lead, work with a local EPA-certified laboratory.

2. Review your school's CCR.

- Use the Community Water Center's guide to understand your CCR. <http://bit.ly/1LJh8kV>
- If the CCR lists contaminants of concern, it will also explain what your water supplier is doing to address these concerns. If you have questions, call your water supplier or the EPA hotline.

3. Testing for Lead

- **If your school was built AFTER 1986:** If there are no contaminants of concern listed on the CCR, you can assume your school's water is probably safe to drink.
- **If your school was built BEFORE 1986:** The EPA recommends that schools test the water for lead, which may be present in older plumbing and faucets. Work with a local EPA-certified laboratory to test the water sources you would like to promote or replace. Find a list of laboratories in the Bay Area at: <http://bit.ly/1MCyj5C>. Find step-by-step instructions on testing your water for lead at: <http://bit.ly/1LC3mi5>.

Water Safety ≠ Water Quality

Water safety and water quality are not the same thing. Even though water from your tap may taste, smell or look unappealing, that doesn't necessarily mean it isn't safe to drink. For example, if your water is cloudy or milky, that may be the result of tiny air bubbles suspended in the water, not due to contaminants.

Sometimes tap water can smell or taste like chlorine, a disinfectant used to kill

germs in water. While chlorine generally isn't harmful in the amounts used in our water supply, it may make your water less pleasant to drink. Leaving your tap water out in a pitcher overnight can help get rid of the chlorine taste.

If your water is safe, but you are still concerned about how it looks, smells or tastes, try refrigerating it or adding fresh fruit or herbs.

Overview of Tap Water Sources

To create an environment that encourages students to drink water throughout the school day, select a water source that is appealing, and install it in a high-traffic area.



Uninsulated Dispensers, Insulated Coolers and Pitchers

Refillable containers with a spout for students to self-serve tap water

Average Cost: \$15 to \$150

Advantages

- Low cost
- Water can be chilled by adding ice or putting container in fridge overnight before serving
- Can be filled up from a water source in a central location in the school and transported to area of use
- No electricity needed to use units
- No additional plumbing needed
- Many schools already have such containers on hand (e.g., for sports teams or staff meetings)

Considerations

- Larger containers are heavy when full (a utility cart is useful for transport)
- More labor-intensive than other options because staff need to fill the container with water daily (or more often)
- Students must have a cup or reusable bottle to get water



Bottleless Water Coolers

Bottleless water coolers that hook into a tap water line. Students press a button to dispense water

Average Cost: \$250 to \$700 to purchase; \$25 to \$150/month to rent

Advantages

- Some units can chill water
- Volume discounts may be available
- Some units can be rented
- Some units are compatible with filtration systems
- Hook directly into tap water line so do not need to be filled like uninsulated dispensers, insulated coolers and pitchers
- Minimal maintenance and cleaning required

Considerations

- Upfront costs are higher than uninsulated dispensers, insulated coolers and pitchers
- May require professional installation, sometimes at additional cost
- Require electricity, which incurs additional cost
- Some units do not drain excess water automatically and staff must manually empty drip tray
- Students must have a cup or reusable bottle to get water



TIPS for picking a water source:

- Consider existing plumbing and layout, your budget, how many students you serve, areas that have heavy foot traffic, and whether or not the water is safe
- If you don't have plumbing in the cafeteria, consider offering water jugs using uninsulated dispensers, insulated coolers or pitchers
- Outdoors, consider a more durable water source that can withstand weather and vandalism, such as a bottle-filler or water fountain
- Don't forget to provide cups or reusable bottles so students can get more than a few sips of water

For more information on water delivery options, see: <http://bit.ly/1MCz9PP>



Fountains and Bottle-Fillers

Drinking water fountains and bottle-fillers for filling water bottles. Some units combine traditional water fountains with a water bottle-filler

Average Cost: \$600 to \$4000 for new unit; \$500 to \$1000 to add bottle-filler to existing fountain

Advantages

- Long-lasting
- Some units can chill water
- Some units are compatible with filtration systems
- Hook directly into tap water line so do not need to be filled like uninsulated dispensers, insulated coolers and pitchers
- Some units operate with gravity and don't require electricity
- Minimal maintenance and cleaning required

Considerations

- Upfront costs are more expensive than uninsulated dispensers, insulated coolers, pitchers and bottleless water coolers
- Requires professional installation
- Students must have a cup or reusable bottle to get water from bottle-fillers; bottle-filler units that also include drinking fountains increase accessibility to students without a cup or bottle





Promote Water Intake at School

Fun and attention-grabbing promotion, along with engaging education, can encourage students to drink more water throughout the school day.



Pencils and stickers are one way to promote water consumption at your school.

Promote water consumption

First, decide what messages you wish to convey to students and staff about the benefits of drinking water. Examples include:

- Water is good for health and performance
- Tap water is safe to drink
- Tap water is better for the environment

Next, decide how you will promote water consumption. The method you choose will depend on who is available to help with promotion, how much funding you have, and what your goals are for the water campaign. Examples include:

- Contests: can be used to increase water intake at school and home
- Posters and flyers: can be displayed around school or given to students to take home
- Rewards: small stickers, pencils, or other prizes can be given to students seen drinking water



Redwood City School District's "Drink Water First" campaign promotes positive messages about drinking water through parent handouts, posters in classrooms and hallways, reusable water bottles with a custom logo and a standing banner listing the Top Ten Reasons to Drink Water.

Learn more at:
<http://www.rcsd.k12.ca.us/Page/4433>



Use colorful and fun artwork, such as murals or posters, to promote drinking water at your child's school.

Educate in and out of the classroom

Plan activities that focus on the benefits of drinking water in classes across subject areas. Work with teachers and local the water supplier to arrange for a field trip to the water supply plant.

Spotlight: Materials that Work

The ReThink Your Drink Campaign has developed a curriculum to teach students K-12 about the importance of healthy hydration. The lessons support California State Standards.

Learn more at: <http://bit.ly/1UluxDw>



School Wellness Policy: Building a Water in Schools Legacy

Wellness policies are written documents outlining a school's goals and commitments related to student health and wellbeing. All schools participating in the child nutrition programs are required by law to implement a school wellness policy.

Strong water policies include language about:

- How, where and when free drinking water will be provided during the school day
- How and when drinking water sources will be maintained
- When and how water quality will be tested
- How safe tap water will be promoted

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is a federal government agency that sets rules and determines funding for child nutrition programs, like the National School Lunch Program. The USDA is working on new rules for local school wellness policies. The USDA recommendations for school wellness policies include language about where and when free drinking water will be provided during the school day and about the maintenance of drinking water sources. When the new rules are issued, schools will need to revise their wellness policies. So, now is an ideal time to examine water-related language in your local school wellness policy.

Having language in the wellness policy that encourages drinking water signals the school's commitment to improving access to free, safe drinking water for a long time. A policy ensures that even with changes in principals or other school administrators, the water program will remain.



This graphic illustrates several components of model school wellness policy language related to drinking water access in the school food service area. Schools should use similar principles to also provide and promote the intake of clean, safe, and appealing water at all times during the day and at before- and after-school activities in other locations throughout the school.

It is important to have language in your school wellness policy that improves access to safe, appealing, and free drinking water throughout the school day.

Model School Wellness Policy Language for Drinking Water Access

This model policy provides language that your school can include in its wellness policy to make sure that safe and appealing water is available throughout the school day and that drinking water sources are regularly maintained. The intent of this model policy is to provide language for the provision of drinking water in schools that aligns with best practice recommendations. It is the “ideal” drinking water policy.* So, it is okay if you cannot include all the language in your school wellness policy at this time.

*For an annotated copy of the model wellness policy with examples of how to implement the policy recommendations, see <http://bit.ly/1M6vAqC>

You can add the following language to your school wellness policies:

Water Access



- The school district shall provide all students and staff with easy access to clean, safe, and appealing drinking water free of charge at every school campus.
- Potable drinking water will be readily available at all times during the day and at before- and after-school activities in the food service and eating areas, common areas, gyms, outdoor physical activity spaces, classrooms, and faculty lounges.

Water Delivery Options



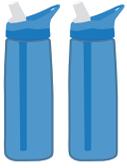
- The school district shall consider the installation of water delivery options that dispense clear, chilled, good-tasting drinking water that is free of odors.
- In the event that there is construction of a new school campus, renovation of a school building, or substantial repairs or upgrades of existing drinking fountains, the school district shall consider non-traditional fountain water delivery options that appeal to students and that include, but are not limited to, tap water dispensers, bottleless water coolers, and fountains with a bottle-filler.

Safety and Quality



- The school district shall conduct water quality tests of all drinking water outlets in each district facility, especially those that provide water for drinking, cooking, and preparing foods and beverages.
- The frequency and type of water quality testing shall be done in accordance with federal safe drinking water laws, state requirements, and the Environmental Protection Agency guidelines.
- The school district shall make available the water quality testing schedule, test results, and any remediation plans to staff, students and parents in an easily accessible format that parents with limited English proficiency or literacy can understand.
- The school district shall service all water delivery options and replace units and water filters in accordance with manufacturer guidance and industry standards.
- Maintenance will be provided as needed or on a regularly scheduled basis (e.g., as part of facility maintenance schedule).
- All water delivery options (e.g., pitchers, bottleless coolers, fountains with a bottle-filler) should be cleaned on a daily basis.

Reusable Bottles and Cups



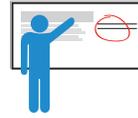
- Students will be permitted to carry reusable water bottles while at school for the specific use of drinking water only.
- Each student must have his/her own water bottle that is clearly labeled with his/her name.
- Students are allowed to take their reusable water bottles into the classroom except into the computer or science labs.
- Reusable or single-use cups will be provided next to water sources.
- Misuse of bottles will be subject to disciplinary action.

Promotion, Marketing and Celebrations



- The school district will actively promote water consumption throughout the school day and at before- and after-school activities. Promotional activities might include announcements, posters and signage, contests, and multimedia campaigns (e.g., videos, songs, social media, etc).
- The school district will encourage all school administrators, teachers, and building staff to be role models by drinking water around students.
- The school district will encourage that drinking water, preferably tap water, be served at all school or school-sponsored events, meetings, or parties (e.g., birthday or holiday celebrations in the classroom).

Education



- [Designated School Official] will review formal curriculum to ensure educational information relating to drinking water is consistent and up-to-date.
- As appropriate, teachers will include information about drinking water in their lesson plans. Lessons will incorporate information about the health and learning-related benefits of drinking adequate levels of water regularly throughout the school day.

Monitoring and Evaluation



- The school district will periodically monitor the implementation of this drinking water policy in its effort to create an environment that supports opportunities for improving water access and water consumption.
- Annually, the school district or individual school sites will assess whether schools are meeting the drinking water policy requirements, especially in regards to the water access, safety and quality, and water delivery options guidelines.
- To ensure continuing progress, the school district or individual school sites will evaluate implementation efforts and their impact on students and staff.



Advocacy Tool: Letter to School Administrator Template

XXXX Date

Salutation

Dear [Name of Your School Administrator],

We are a group of concerned **[list the stakeholders who make up your water team (e.g., parents, teachers and local business owners)]** who are advocating for improved access to free, appealing drinking water in our children's schools.

Explain why they should care

As you may know, the 2010 Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act mandates that schools participating in the National School Lunch Program make free water available to students in school cafeterias. Similarly, California Senate Bill 1413 requires school districts to provide free, fresh drinking water wherever meals are served or eaten. It is important that we improve the availability of drinking water in our cafeteria so that we are in compliance with the state and federal law.

In addition to offering free water in the cafeteria, it is also important that we improve drinking water access throughout the school campus in areas where students learn and play: in classrooms, physical education areas and blacktops. Serving water in schools can improve our children's health and wellbeing; studies suggest that drinking water instead of sugary drinks may prevent obesity, reduce dental caries and improve cognitive function.

Show you've done your homework

At our school, water is currently provided to students **[describe the results of your water audit, listing the number of water sources at your school, their level of cleanliness and upkeep]**.

When we observe students in the cafeteria during lunch, we see **[describe the results of your observations, listing the number of students you observe using the water sources, and the number of students drinking other sugary drinks such as soda or fruit drinks]**.

Our school wellness policy says **[describe the school wellness policy clauses related to water and other beverages or lack of policy language around water]**.

Outline your goals

We would like to see **[list the changes your group hopes to achieve and a timeline]**.

You may want to include information about the specific locations where water access needs to be improved. Does an existing unit need increased maintenance or should a new unit be installed? Do children need cups or bottles provided to increase water intake? Is there language you would like to include in the school wellness policy that doesn't currently exist? If you have secured some or all of the funding for your project, you can mention it here to demonstrate the support you have already received.

Set up a meeting

We would like to set up a time to meet with you in the coming weeks to discuss our goals. Please contact us at **[include your contact information]**.

Closing

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[List names and titles of your group members]



Evaluation Tool: Drinking Water Inventory

Conducting a drinking water inventory can help you identify which existing water sources may need to be replaced or better maintained, and where on campus you may need additional water sources.

What you'll need:

- Pen
- Clipboard
- Thermometer
- 8-ounce measuring cup
- Stopwatch
- Camera (or a camera phone)
- Partner

Instructions

- **Get permission.** Ask for approval from relevant school staff before checking water sources (e.g., principal, food services staff for cafeteria, physical education teachers for physical activity area). In some schools, each classroom has its own sink or water fountain. Work with the school to find a time to check classrooms, or just stick to the water sources located in common areas.
- **Ask for a tour.** In order to capture all water sources, ask your school janitor or facilities staff to give you a tour -- walk down each hallway of the school and visit the cafeteria and gymnasium.
- **Document what you see.** For each source you observe, create an entry on the data collection table on the next page. Get a map of the school from the front office and label where each water source is located.
- **Create separate entries for each spout.** If a water source has more than one spout (e.g., a fountain with a bottle filler attachment, a sink with a fountain attachment, a fountain with two or more spouts), create a unique audit entry for each one.

What you'll see:

Here are a few of the most common water sources you'll see in schools



Insulated Cooler



Uninsulated Dispenser



Pitcher



Bottleless Water Cooler



Bottled Water Cooler



Fountain



Bottle-Filler



Sink



Individual Bottled Water

Ideal Water Source Characteristics

Cleanliness and Obstructions: Students are more likely to drink from a water source that is clean and easily visible without major obstructions.

Flow: Measuring the time it takes to fill an 8 ounce cup can help you understand how long it would take a student to fill his/her water bottle, or to get a few sips of water. Water sources with very low or erratic water flow are less appealing to students.

Temperature: Studies suggest that 59° F is the drinking water temperature most preferred by adults. To encourage water consumption, try to offer water that is 60°F or below.

If your school's water sources are dirty or obstructed, have low flow or erratic water pressure, or dispense water that is too warm, you can advocate for improvements in these areas.



1

Where is the water source located? (Record the nearest room number or landmark):

2

What type of water source are you observing? (Check one)

- Insulated Cooler Bottled Water Cooler Individual Bottled Water
- Uninsulated Dispenser Fountain Other: _____
- Pitcher Bottle-Filler
- Bottleless Water Cooler Sink

3

To whom is water available at this source? (Check all that apply)

- Students Faculty / Staff Parents Public Other: _____

4

Is water available to actually drink from this source? (Check one)

- Yes No **If no, why? (Check all that apply)**
- Broken Empty Very Low Flow Other: _____

5

Is the water source clean or dirty? (Check one)

- Clean Dirty **If dirty, how? (Check all that apply)**
- Clogged Moldy Rusty Trash/Debris in Basin
- Stagnant Water Other: _____

6

Are there any obstructions blocking access to this water source? (e.g. mops, brooms, trash cans, desks) (Check one)

- No Yes **If yes, describe:** _____

7

Are there cups available at this water source? (Check one)

- No Yes **If yes, how many ounces are the cups? What material are they?**
- _____

8

How long does it take to fill up an 8-ounce cup from this source? (Record the number of seconds)

_____ seconds



9

What is the temperature of the water from this source? (Record the degrees F)

_____ °F

10

Are there any signs, posters, or advertisements located nearby about consuming water or other beverages?

No Yes

If yes, what kind of signs are located nearby? (Check all that apply)

Encouraging water consumption

Describe: _____

Discouraging water consumption

Describe: _____

Encouraging consumption of another beverage

Describe: _____

Discouraging consumption of another beverage

Describe: _____

11

Take a photo of the water source. Label the photo with:

1) the name of the school, 2) the date, and 3) the location of the water source

GENERAL NOTES:



Evaluation Tool: Observe Students Drinking Water

One way you can evaluate your program is by examining the percentage of students who access a water source before and after the program started.

What you'll need:

- Observation tool
- Pen
- Clipboard
- Thermometer or cell phone weather application to check air temperature
- A partner (you can compare notes after to make sure you didn't miss anything)

Instructions:

- Ask the school secretary for the school-wide attendance for the day you are observing.
- The temperature outside can affect how much students drink. Record the air temperature when you start and finish. To be able to compare results over time, conduct your observations on days with similar weather.
- Tally the number of students who drink water from the observed water source. This can include taking sips, filling cups or filling water bottles.
- Make note of anything at school that might affect how many students drink water, such as an event (celebration, etc) or activity (exams, students on a field trip, etc).
- You can observe any time period you wish but be consistent each time. For example, if you observe a lunch period at the beginning of your water program, you will want to always observe the same lunch period.
- For more accurate results, conduct observations on two days in a row and average your results.
- You can repeat this observation for other water sources, or for the same water source at different times of day.

GENERAL INFORMATION

School Name

Date

Data Collector's Name

Today's Total Attendance

Water Source Observed: (Describe the type of source, its location and if cups are available nearby)

Observation Start Time

Observation End Time

Temperature at Start

Temperature at End

OBSERVATIONS

Tally of Students Who Drank from Observed Water Source:

Took Sips

Filled Cups

Filled Bottles

To Calculate the Percentage of Students Drinking:

$$\frac{\text{_____}}{\text{Total \# Took Sips}} + \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{Total \# Filled Cups}} + \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{Total \# Filled Bottles}} = \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{Total \# Drinking}}$$

Divide by total attendance to find the percentage of students drinking:

$$\frac{\text{_____}}{\text{Total \# Drinking (from above)}} \div \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{Today's Attendance}} \times 100 = \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{Percentage Drinking}} \%$$

NOTES: Make note of anything that might affect how many students drink water (e.g., minimum day, holiday celebration, promotional signs about water or other beverages, obstruction of water source by mops, brooms, trash cans) and take an inventory of beverages available for sale near water source



Action Plan Checklist

The seven simple steps to create a water program at your child's school are:

1. Build a team
2. Conduct a drinking water inventory
3. Test the drinking water
4. Choose and fund a water delivery method
5. Promote water consumption and education
6. Develop language for your school's wellness policy
7. Monitor your progress and share findings with others

Step 1: Build a team

Lead Person

Deadline

Goal

(Example: Have three to five school and community leaders form a core group and meet regularly to develop a school water program.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Draft a letter to recruit volunteer members; schedule a time that works for members; find a meeting location)

1.

2.

3.

4.



Step 2a: Conduct a drinking water inventory

Lead Person _____

Deadline _____

Goal

(Example: Assess the number and quality of drinking water sources available.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Recruit parent and student volunteers; use the water inventory tool to assess the number and quality of water sources)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Step 2b: Share water inventory findings with key leaders

Lead Person _____

Deadline _____

Goal

(Example: Assist students in presenting findings to key school staff.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Prepare a summary of the findings; schedule a meeting with school administrators; prepare a presentation for administrators)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Step 3a: Test the drinking water

Lead Person _____

Deadline _____

Goal

(Example: Test for contaminants in drinking water sources that you want to promote, use or replace.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Contact the local water supplier for a consumer confidence report; find an EPA laboratory to test drinking water; recruit parent and student volunteers to gather samples from drinking water sources and send to the laboratory)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Step 3b: Share water testing findings with key leaders

Lead Person _____

Deadline _____

Goal

(Example: Assist students in presenting findings to key school staff.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Prepare a summary of the findings; schedule a meeting with school administrators; prepare a presentation for administrators)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Step 4a: Choose a water delivery method

Lead Person _____

Deadline _____

Goal

(Example: Work with the school community to select a new water source.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Survey students, school staff and parents about the type of water source they would like; determine where plumbing exists in the school; develop a budget for the cost of the new water source)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Step 4b: Ask for funding to support your water program

Lead Person _____

Deadline _____

Goal

(Example: Raise enough money to install one water station and provide reusable water bottles to the students.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Prepare a list of potential funders; develop a “pitch” for your project; send request letters to potential funders)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Step 5a: Promote water consumption

Lead Person _____

Deadline _____

Goal

(Example: Work with a group of students to develop posters to encourage staff and students to drink more water.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Find an interested student group; talk with students about messages they think would help promote water; design posters)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Step 5b: Provide water education in and out of the classroom

Lead Person _____

Deadline _____

Goal

(Example: Invite a speaker from the local water supplier to speak to the students in the classroom about water quality.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Draft an email or letter to a local water supplier; work with teachers to schedule the visit; send a thank you note)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Step 6: Develop language for your school’s wellness policy

Lead Person _____

Deadline _____

Goal

(Example: Add language to the district wellness policy that requires water to be available to students before, during and after school.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Study the current school wellness policy; collect examples of model wellness policies from other schools; draft a wellness policy that includes language about when water should be made available)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Step 7: Monitor your program and share findings with others

Lead Person _____

Deadline _____

Goal

(Example: Track the number of drinking water sources installed and the number of students who drink from these new water sources using the water source observation tool.)

Action Steps:

(Examples: Map water sources at the school; recruit parent and student volunteers to help count students who use the water; write a report of results)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Drink more
water!

