

Appendix 1: School Drinking Water Needs Assessment Checklist and Planning Guide

The **School Drinking Water Needs Assessment Checklist and Planning Guide** is designed to help schools identify strengths, areas for improvement, and priority actions, and to develop measurable goals and objectives for improving access to and consumption of drinking water.

Respond to each question in the School Drinking Water Needs Assessment Checklist. In the notes section of the checklist, capture additional details or clarifying comments. For example, if your school district is working on developing a local school wellness policy that would incorporate language on student access to water fountains or filling stations throughout the school day, you might make note of the steps being taken to achieve that, or the barriers that make it difficult to achieve. Those notes will help guide you in developing your goals and objectives.

After completing the School Drinking Water Needs Assessment Checklist, **two planning questions** are provided to help guide further action to promote drinking water access within your school.

School Drinking Water Needs Assessment Checklist	Response options		Notes
	Yes	No	
Step 1: Assess state, district, and school policies and practices related to water access.			
Food Service Areas			
a. Does the school provide students with access to drinking water during the meal periods, as required by USDA?			
b. Is there a state requirement that students have access to drinking water during meals and snacks?			
c. Is there a district policy requiring water to be provided during meals and snacks (e.g., Local School Wellness Policy)?			
d. Does the district or school have Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for placement, filling, and cleaning of bulk bottled water dispensers in the cafeteria?			
Other Areas in the School			
e. What are the state or local plumbing codes and requirements for the number of water access points? What is the fountains-to-students ratio in your school? Does it meet the plumbing code requirements?			
f. Are there state or local sanitary codes for cleaning and maintaining drinking fountains, water containers, hydration stations, and other methods for delivering drinking water?			
g. Does the school district have policies related to drinking water access? Policies may address providing students with access to water fountains or water filling stations throughout the school, allowing students to bring fillable water containers to class, allowing students to get up to get a drink of water during class, providing cups at water access points, and marketing or promoting drinking water during the school day or at school-sponsored events and activities.			
Step 2: Review states and local water testing requirements and recommendations.			
a. Does your school meet the definition of a public water system and, therefore, comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)?			
b. If so, does it meet all federal and state standards under the SDWA?			

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	Yes	No	
c. Has your school's water quality been tested? When was it last tested?			
d. Are testing results readily available to students, parents, and the community?			
e. Is the available drinking water optimally fluoridated?			
Step 3: Conduct an assessment of the school water access environment.			
<p>a. What kind of building information does your school or district regularly collect? Does your facilities, maintenance, or environmental health division collect or maintain records of water access points or water quality testing results in your school district or individual school building?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the following water access points available to students at school? (Please indicate the number and where they are located in the Notes column, for example, in the cafeteria, gymnasium, hallway.) Refer to Appendix 2 to learn more about the differences between each of these water access points. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Water fountains. ii. Water coolers. iii. Bottle fillers. iv. Pitchers or containers of water served at lunch. v. Other (please describe). 			
<p>b. Are the drinking water access points that are available to students clean and operating properly?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements to assess include the clarity of the water, cleanliness (e.g., any visible dirt, gum, or trash), temperature of the water, and water pressure. 			
c. Are cups provided at drinking water access points?			
d. Is there signage or other materials promoting drinking water in the school? Please include where this information is included.			
Step 4: Perception about drinking water.			
Have you assessed students' and other stakeholders' (e.g., school administrators, staff, health and nutrition agency representatives, and families) perceptions about current drinking water and about providing drinking water in the school?			
Step 5: Identify key water champions.			
a. Are there potential water champions in your school? You can identify specific champions in the Notes section (e.g., parents, teachers, school nutrition staff).			
b. Describe the potential role of water champions in the Notes section.			

Planning Question 1: On the basis of the results from the School Drinking Water Needs Assessment, what are the strengths and areas for improvement in providing access to and consumption of drinking water?

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
1. <i>Example: All water access points are clean and operating properly.</i>	1. <i>Example: Students perceive that the tap water at school is not safe</i>
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Planning Question 2: On the basis of the areas for improvement identified above, what are the recommended priority actions for improving access to and consumption of drinking water (e.g., increase funding for water-related programs, install one new water access point in the cafeteria, form a drinking water student committee)?

1. *Example: Develop and implement a water promotion campaign to address students' concerns about water safety.*

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____
