

Water Stations

A water station combines a chilled, filtered water source with a water fountain and up to three water bottle filler spouts. This design increases the number of physical water access sites youth can use to obtain portable adequate servings of water in a timely fashion. Rather than only getting one drink, youth can fill a water bottle quickly and keep water with them throughout the day (see Image 2). We chose a station based on price, ease of installation, vandal-proof design, filter accessibility, and having a built-in water volume monitor.

Student Poster Contest & Education Campaign

In the late spring of 2011, the three project schools participated in a poster and slogan contest. Students reviewed an educational health and water fact sheet. They entered artwork that encouraged others to drink water in order to improve their health. We displayed winning entries above the new water stations and on water bottles.



Image 2: Water station



Image 3: Winning poster and water bottle

Water Bottles

Upstream Public Health purchased water bottles BPA-free water bottles made of a clear, non-colored material. All students at the three schools received new, free water bottles decorated with art from the poster contest winners.

Policy Development

The District School Board updated its wellness policy to include Administrative Rules on water access in early Fall, 2011. It reads: *"The district recognizes that children need an ongoing water supply to keep their bodies functioning optimally and to avoid dehydration. Therefore, the district will promote the consumption of water as an essential nutrient that plays a role in overall health and will provide all students and employees with access to clean and safe drinking water free of charge at all district facilities. Students will be permitted to carry water bottles while at school. Building Administrators are directed to develop individual school guidelines to implement this policy."*

Limitations, Challenges and Solutions

We encountered one key challenge with our water stations. At two schools, the filters had to be changed more frequently than expected (each filter is supposed to last for approximately 30,000 gallons). We learned that our schools have sediment in their pipes; although it is not toxic, it clogs up the sensitive filter. The District plumber installed a sieve in the plumbing before each unit and a separate sediment filter. We are still assessing if this is an adequate solution or if we will need to install something less sensitive. The units may generate more water splash than a typical fountain when there is high student traffic. Schools addressed this with "caution wet floor" signs and towels. We are in the process of evaluating the project's impact on student use of the water stations and student water consumption.

Acknowledgments

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Reference

- [1] Wang Y.C. et. al. "Impact of Change in Sweetened Caloric Beverage Consumption on Energy Intake Among Children and Adolescents". Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. Vol. 163, No. 4, April 2009.
- [2] Ngo, D. and R. Leman (2007). Oregon overweight, obesity, physical activity, and nutrition facts. Physical Activity and Nutrition Program Department of Human Services. www.healthoregon.org/hpcdp/physicalactivityandnutrition.