

# “Increasing Access to Drinking Water in Ohio’s Schools”

**Webinar: May 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**2:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

## Why provide access to drinking water in schools?

Drinking water can contribute to good health, and schools are in a unique position to promote healthy, dietary behaviors, including drinking water. More than 95% of children and adolescents are enrolled in schools, and students typically spend at least 6 hours at school each day.<sup>1</sup> Ensuring that students have access to safe, free drinking water throughout the school environment gives them a healthy alternative to sugar-sweetened beverages before, during, and after school. Access to safe, free drinking water helps to increase students’ overall water consumption, maintain hydration, and reduce energy intake, if substituted for sugar-sweetened beverages. In addition, adequate hydration may improve cognitive function among children and adolescents, which is important for learning. Drinking water, if fluoridated, also plays a role in preventing dental caries (cavities).

## Are schools required to provide access to drinking water?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires that schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) make plain (i.e., no flavoring, additives, or carbonation) drinking water available to students at no cost during the lunch meal periods at the locations where meals are served. Schools must also make drinking water available during the School Breakfast Program (SBP), when breakfast is served in the cafeteria. Schools that participate in the Afterschool Snack Program are encouraged to provide drinking water when snacks are served. Water is not considered part of the reimbursable meal, and there is no separate funding for providing drinking water. Funds from the nonprofit food service account may be used to pay for some costs of providing the water, including cups and pitchers. The USDA has issued guidance on this requirement, including information on determining allowable costs. Schools can consult their state education or agriculture agencies with additional questions about meeting these requirements. States, school districts, and individual schools may have additional policies and regulations requiring drinking water in schools.

## Webinar content will include:

- Strategies for providing water in schools
- Overview of the CDC’s toolkit, including conducting needs assessment, creating an access plan, overcoming barriers, optional equipment, and resources
- Success stories from Ohio schools
- Speakers include staff from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Ohio Department of Health and Sandusky County Health Department

**RSVP:** [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/drinkingwater\\_access\\_schools](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/drinkingwater_access_schools)

**Webinar Link:** <https://odh-ohio.webex.com/odh-ohio/j.php?MTID=m59b4c6f580af21f91cb8df7914d30df0>

**Conference Line:** Phone Number: (614) 230-0229  
Toll Free: (855) 877-3730  
Meeting ID: 35534

## Download Toolkit:

[http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/pdf/water\\_access\\_in\\_schools.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/pdf/water_access_in_schools.pdf)

**Questions:** Contact Laura Rooney, [laura.rooney@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:laura.rooney@odh.ohio.gov)

