



**Thirsty
for
Health**



**Helping Kansas Kids
Stay Healthy**



Partners



Funder



American Heart Association.





THIRSTY FOR HEALTH COALITION

We promote the installation of filtered water bottle filling stations in schools so kids have consistent access to clean water.

- Increasing community awareness
- Gathering community opinion
- Advocating for policy change with community leaders

Studies show even mild dehydration, such as the loss of 1–3% of body weight, can impair many aspects of brain function.

In 2009–2012, a national survey of children ages 6-19 found that **more than half (54.5%) of U.S. children and adolescents were inadequately hydrated.**

—
Thirsty for Health values student academic achievement and health.

Here are **some facts**
about drinking
water.

[Benefits of Drinking Water: How It Affects Your Energy, Weight & More \(healthline.com\)](https://www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-drinking-water)

Drinking water prevents headaches and migraines

Research has shown that a headache is one of the **most common symptoms of dehydration.**



According to the CDC there are general health benefits.

Water plays an important role in maintaining a child's overall health. Drinking water supports children's muscles, joints, and tissues; improves their digestive system.





Promoting hydration

On average, kids drink about 2.4 ounces of water when they drink directly from a water fountain (size of a condiment cup)



When they have access to a water bottle filling station with cups and bottles, they triple their water intake.

Source: Kenney EL, Gortmaker SL, Carter JE, Howe MC, Reiner JF, Craddock AL. Grab a Cup, Fill it Up! An intervention to promote the convenience of drinking water and increase student water consumption during school lunch. *Am J Public Health*. 2015; 105:1777-83. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2015.302645.



Creating habits

National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity:

“Because children spend most of their day at school, school policies and programs can have a significant impact on encouraging – or discouraging – healthy water consumption.”

http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/documents/WaterAccess_FactSht_FINAL_20111026.pdf

Children from low-income households are more likely to be **heavy consumers of sugary drinks than children from high-income households.**



1-20oz. Soda
a Day for
a Month = **5 lbs.** of Sugar



Why water bottle filling stations?

When Oral Health Kansas launched a similar project students and superintendents indicated that students **were drinking more water after installing water bottle filling stations.**



Why filters?

- Kansas has many lead pipes that carry water. In fact **“risk lead exposure from drinking water is at greater rates than almost any other state”** (Kite, 2021).
- This is especially concerning considering that **“in 2014, less than half of schools in the U.S. conducted periodic tests of drinking water outlets for lead and only about a quarter (25.6%) of schools required staff training on drinking water quality”** (VFHK, 2020).



LEAD
(Treated)

LEAD
(Untreated)

COPPER

Why filters?

- The CDC explains that “Lead in paint, soil, air, or water is invisible to the naked eye and has no smell. **No safe blood lead level in children has been identified.**”
- “Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child’s health, including damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems, hearing and speech problems”



Kansas kids are already facing the consequences of inaction

According to a national study published by the American Medical Association last month, 65% of Kansas children have elevated levels of lead in their blood – 15 points higher than the national average.



<https://www.cjonline.com/story/opinion/2021/11/05/kansas-children-have-elevated-levels-lead-their-blood/6295714001/>

The background of the slide is a dimly lit classroom. In the foreground, there are several rows of yellow desks and red chairs. In the background, many students are seated at their desks, some looking towards the front of the room. The lighting is low, with some overhead lights visible. The overall atmosphere is quiet and focused.

The majority of people see the benefits of water access

A national survey found that 96% of individuals aged 17 and older supported required access to water throughout the day in schools.



Focus Group Results

We met with 23 families in Topeka. We consistently found that clean water access in schools was indicated to be an important consideration for parents.

Proposed Policy

School districts adopt a policy that makes clean, safe drinking water readily available to all students.

- All newly constructed school buildings and school buildings undergoing refurbishment will be equipped with water bottle filling stations
- Minimum of 1 filling station per 100 people
- Minimum of 1 filling station on each floor and in each wing
- Minimum of 1 filling station in food service areas
- Minimum of 1 filling station in gymnasiums and recreation areas
- Filling stations dispense clean, cooled, filtered drinking water



Funding for water bottle filling stations

- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds (CARES Act funding)
- Parent-Teacher Organization fundraisers
- Student government fundraisers
- Community foundations
- Local health/hospital foundations
- Corporate grants or donations



What are our next steps?

- Through our research, our team has identified lead concentration as a major area of concern.
- **In the wake of progress earlier this year with Missouri's "Get the Lead Out of School Drinking Water Act"** (which requires that schools provide drinking water with lead concentration below five parts per billion (5 ppb)) **our team is interested in considering similar legislative steps in Kansas.**

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