



Wisconsin  
CHAPTER



marshfield  
children's hospital



TO: Wisconsin Plumbing Code Advisory Committee

DATE: June 23, 2021

RE: Water Filling Stations in Schools

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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; and keeps their growing bodies hydrated. Drinking water can help people maintain a healthier weight, and children who drink fluoridated water instead of sugary drinks have a reduced risk of dental caries.

Unfortunately, many children don't drink enough water. In 2009-2012, a national survey of children ages 6-19 found that more than half (54.5 percent) of U.S. children and adolescents were inadequately hydrated. Younger children are less likely to drink enough water compared to older children.

Studies have shown increased water consumption after the installation of water filling stations. A study of New York City public schools found students nearly tripled the amount of water they took after water dispensers were installed in the cafeteria, and they continued to choose water the following school year. Installing drinking water dispensers in schools was also associated with a decline in the likelihood of being overweight. A study of more than one million children in New York City public elementary and middle schools found that attending a school with water jets (i.e., drinking water dispensers) was associated with a significant decline in the likelihood of being overweight for boys (0.9 percent point reduction) and girls (0.6 percentage point reduction).

Additionally, during these unprecedented times, water bottle filling stations and personal water bottles may help reduce the spread of germs and disease. In one study, water fountains and manual pencil sharpener handles were determined to be the germiest surfaces in classrooms. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDC now encourages staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains.

The cost of a water filling station compared to a water fountain is nominal in the process of construction and can save dollars over time. Please put water within reach for our children. **Please update plumbing code to ensure all newly constructed schools and schools undergoing major renovations have water bottle filling stations.**

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Hudzinski with the American Heart Association at [nicole.hudzinski@heart.org](mailto:nicole.hudzinski@heart.org) or 608-225-4042.