



Water Filling Stations in Schools Connecting with MMSD School Board Members

Fast Facts

- Drinking water is important for a child's health.
- We must find ways to make water more accessible and appealing in the school environment.
- We must ensure the water is clean and safe to drink.
- MMSD has been a leader in improving access to water. The Got Water? Program has been hugely successful with students and faculty. This collaborative project installed water filling stations in a handful of schools each year.
- More recently, the School Board invested funding to replace water fountains with water filling station/fountain combo units in schools throughout the district. Thank you!
- Water filling stations can be sensory activated, helping to prevent germ transfer. They can also filter lead and other contaminants.
- Moving forward, let's make sure water filling stations are included in all newly built schools and as part of major renovations.
- And let's permanently change school policy and allow all children to carry water bottles in the classroom, keeping water within reach for all students.

What specifically are we advocating for?

- We are advocating for water filling stations to be installed in new schools being built or schools going through major renovations. These stations feature a water bottle filler, often with a traditional water fountain or bubbler. Specific criteria are:
 - A minimum of one (1) water bottle filling station per 200 building occupants.
 - A minimum of one (1) water bottle filling station on each floor and wing of each school building.
 - A minimum of one (1) water bottle filling station in all school food service areas.
 - A minimum of one (1) water bottle filling station located in or near gymnasiums, outdoor recreation spaces, and other high-traffic areas.
 - Water bottle filling stations will be cooled and filtered.
 - Filling stations will be touchless and cleaned and maintained regularly.
- We are also advocating for students to be allowed to carry water bottles into the classroom. The pandemic has shown us that allowing water bottles in the classroom is possible, and acceptance of this allowance has improved. It's time to change school policy to ensure this continues to be allowed in all classrooms, for all children.

How much do water filling stations cost?

- The cost of a water filling station compared to a water fountain is nominal in the process of construction. Water filling stations vary in cost, depending on the features included.
- As part of the Got Water? Program, Madison Metropolitan Public Schools, in partnership with the Madison Water Utility and Dane County Healthy Kids Collaborative, have been installing one water filling station in 6 existing Madison schools per year. The average cost for this project is \$1,000 per filling stations (unit itself) and \$2,500 for installation costs. The filter replacement rate depends on usage, averaging 1 to 3 times per year at a cost of \$60 per filter.
- As was stated above, earlier this year the School Board did invest funding to replace water fountains with water filling station/fountain combo units in schools throughout the entire district.

Additional Talking Points:

- All children no matter where they live, should have access to clean, safe drinking water.
- Studies have shown there are more germs on an average classroom water fountain spigot than on a toilet seat.
- Establishing healthy habits early is key to a healthy future.
- Water access is part of creating a healthy school environment that helps set children up for a healthy future.
- Water plays an important role in maintaining a child's overall health.
- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks can help children grow up at a healthy weight.
- Drinking water can help children learn better.
- Children who drink water instead of sugary drinks are less likely to have cavities.
- Many children do not drink enough water; providing access in school can increase the amount of water children drink.
- Safe and appealing water should be available in schools at no charge to students and staff.

MMSD School Board Members & Contact Information

All 7 adult members can be reached at once by e-mailing board@madison.k12.wi.us.

Student reps can cast advisory votes but not "official" votes.

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