

Soft Drinks and School-Age Children

Make Mine Water

The Water-Learning Connection¹

- Just ten minutes after drinking water there is an increase in the physiological and cognitive processes in the brain.
- The brain needs water about every 45 minutes of the waking day or it starts a dehydration process in the problem-solving portion of the brain.
- Making water available to students at all times, including during testing, avoids peaks and valleys in hydration and learning.

Water Facts

- The world's oceans cover 70% of the earth's surface.
- Water constitutes 55-60% of an adult's body weight and a higher percentage of a child's.
- The human brain is 85% water.

Functions of Water in the Body

- Regulates body temperature.
- Carries nutrients and waste products throughout the body.
- Fills the cells and the spaces between them.
- Adds moisture to the air we breathe so lungs can process it.
- Serves as shock absorbers for organs.
- Acts as lubricants around joints.
- Participates in chemical reactions.

Access to Drinking Water in North Carolina Schools

During the school day, children may have access to water at meal or snack time or in transit between classes. Beverages in class outside of special occasions or circumstances are generally not allowed. Milk and juice are the beverages of choice for school meals. Additional choices, including high calorie fruit-flavored beverages, tea and soda, and sometimes water, are often available in the cafeteria or vending machines during lunch. At the elementary level, class water breaks are allowed sometimes, but are at the discretion of the teacher. Secondary school students often do not have time between classes to stop at available water fountains. Students may not recognize thirst and may go an entire school day without drinking water.

Currently, North Carolina Building Code covers the placement of water fountains in new construction or major renovation of schools. It requires one for every 75 students or a minimum of one per floor in a multi-level building. The American Disabilities Act code requires handicapped-accessible fountains. Portable classrooms (trailers) are exempt from interior plumbing if they are within 200 horizontal feet of a water source for grades K-9 and 450 feet for grades 10-12. While these requirements are adequate for newer or recently renovated facilities, schools built before the code was established are exempt and many older facilities do not meet code.

¹www.brain.gym.com