

H2O...Way to Go!



Water Hydration at School

WHY DOES WATER MATTER?

When it comes to school, every teacher, parent and student knows about the “three Rs”... but, far too often, we forget about the big H₂O! Regular water hydration is an important part of every young student’s daily routine. Did you know that the brain is composed of about 80% water? Drinking water throughout the day is not only a vital component of a standard health regimen, but it also helps to ensure that each young person gets the most out of his or her education. Sodas and other sweet drinks are a poor substitute for water; they add unwanted calories and are full of artificial ingredients. Caffeinated drinks can cause distraction, anxiety and other problems.



WHAT IS BEING DONE?

Fortunately, it’s easy to make sure students get enough water. All schools in Mississippi are equipped with water fountains located throughout the buildings, and new vending regulations will limit access to sugared, carbonated soft drinks.



Individual school policies now allow students access to water throughout the day. One way schools accomplish this is to allow students to keep a water bottle in class. Oak Grove Lower Elementary School already provides its entire student body with water bottles featuring the school’s logo. Teachers may also provide regular or on-demand water breaks.

What if Students Don’t Get Enough Water?

- ✓ Body dehydrates
- ✓ Mental performance declines
- ✓ Test scores decline
- ✓ Lethargy and distraction emerge
- ✓ Bed-wetting and health problems increase

Negative effects magnify in combination with exercise or excessive heat!

SOURCE: www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk

Mississippi has taken a national lead as one of the first states to pass progressive beverage requirements* in public schools. As of the 2007-08 school year, carbonated soft drinks with full sugar will no longer be sold to students in Mississippi schools during the school day. Starting with the 2008-09 year, only specific drinks may be sold to students, with an eye towards meeting the hydration and nutritional needs of students of every age. These drinks include bottled water, lowfat and nonfat milk, 100% juice (without added sweeteners), no/low calorie beverages and light juices or sports drinks.

*Requirements vary for each age group.

www.healthyschoolsms.org



IS IT WORKING?

One new approach to water hydration is already positively impacting the educational and physical well-being of our students. During the 2006-07 school year, a pilot hydration project in 19 schools throughout the state tested the effects of giving children access to water bottles throughout the day. The results?

Students were:

- more attentive
- drinking more water and milk and drinking less soda
- reporting fewer headaches
- bringing fewer sodas or other sweet drinks from home and drinking water instead

Teachers also reported that they saw an increase in teaching time and fewer interruptions. They say that they even found themselves drinking more water!



“When children drink plenty of water, they think better.

They aren't distracted from being dehydrated or thirsty, and they are more alert as a result. We're also teaching them to be earth-friendly by using one water bottle and refilling it. They learn a little something about the environment while also improving their overall health and concentration.”

*Teresa Jenny, Principal
OAK GROVE LOWER ELEMENTARY,
on her school's
water bottle program*



WHO'S WORKING WITH US?

Beverage companies and distributors are cooperating with schools to provide healthy vending machine alternatives to sugared beverages. Appropriate changes to the images on the front of the machines reinforce healthy, active lifestyles.

“By giving our students regular access to water, we're helping them develop a healthier lifestyle without making it seem like a chore.”

*Cherrie Britt, Health Coordinator,
SUNFLOWER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS*

Water is a crucial part of every student's school day. Regular hydration will help keep children fit, healthy, and ready to succeed!

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Additional resources are available online to assist with implementing a water hydration program in your school.

www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk/resources.html

We would love to help you find ways to ensure that your students are properly hydrated. Please contact us for information.

**Mississippi
Department of Education**
Office of Healthy Schools
P.O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205
601.359.1737



www.healthyschoolsms.org

 **Health is
Academic**
sponsored by The Bower Foundation