Welcome to the third module in CDC’s online training series about water access in schools. This learning module will cover key steps schools can take to build effective access for drinking water.

Once a school determines that the water is safe to drink, then the next step is to make sure that students can easily get a drink of water throughout the school day.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires schools to make drinking water available to students at no charge, during lunch time where the meals are served. This could be a water fountain that is in or near the cafeteria, or it could be a water dispenser or pitcher with cups on tables or a cart in the cafeteria. Students should be able to get up from the table to get a drink of water during the lunch period.

This requirement also applies to breakfast when breakfast is served in the cafeteria.

However, there is more to access than just having water available during meal times.

Both of the photos shown here could technically meet the federal requirements under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. Those requirements do not say anything about ensuring that the water fountain is appealing, or that cups are provided, or that water is promoted as a healthy beverage choice. But clearly one of these drinking water options is more appealing than the other.

So what does it mean to have effective water access in schools? What does that really look like?

We will talk through some of the key factors that make water truly accessible.

Please continue to Module 3, part 2.