Welcome to part two of the learning module about steps schools can take to build effective access for drinking water.

First and foremost, it is critical that schools ensure that drinking water is safe. Once that is established, schools can address other aspects of water access including

* Ensuring that the product is appealing
* Ensuring that the price is competitive with other beverage choices, or in the case of water fountains, no charge.
* Placing water in multiple locations throughout the school for students and staff to access.
* Including language about water access in school and district-level policies.
* And, promoting water as an optimal beverage choice.

Some ways to make water appealing to students and staff are to ensure that the drinking fountains are clean and properly maintained, that water sources have good temperature, water pressure and flow, and that cups are provided and students are allowed to have water bottles with them during the school day. Having cups or water bottles means that students and staff can get more than a sip from the fountain.

In terms of price, water should be available throughout the day at no charge and in multiple locations. And, if bottled water is sold in vending machines, school stores, or a la carte in the cafeteria, then the prices should be competitive with other beverages meaning that they are equal to or less than other beverage options.

Part of effective access means that water is available throughout the school. This includes the cafeteria, the gymnasium, other indoor and outdoor physical activity facilities, and hallways throughout the school. When thinking about key locations in a specific school, consider how students and staff move through the buildings and where school activities occur.

Effective access also means that students can easily access the water throughout the school day.

Local school wellness policies can address access to drinking water by including language to allow student to have a water bottle with them during the day or be able to get up from their desk if they need a drink of water.

Additionally, state or local plumbing codes can have requirements for the number of water fountains needed per number of students at the school.

There are several ways to promote water that can help build demand for it.

Ideally promotional materials are displayed near water sources. This could include posters and signs as well as footprints on the floor leading to the water fountain. We will share examples of promotion materials in the next learning module.

Another form of promotion is for adults to model healthy beverage choices. This includes drinking water rather than sugary drinks in classrooms and other parts of the school.

Lastly, schools can share information to staff, students, and families about water quality so that they know that it is safe to drink.

 Please continue to Module 3 – Part 3.