

Evaluate Progress





Evaluation is a process that can be used to assess and improve policies and practices among school settings, including access to drinking water. Evaluation can help access to drinking water policies and practices by identifying strengths and weakness, developing plans for improvement, improving the implementation of policies and practices, and measuring changes in the school environment, as well as the dietary habits of students and staff.

Evaluation activities vary for the purpose, design, and resources required. There are two main types of evaluation: process and outcome. Process evaluation aims to assess the extent to which a policy, program, or practice has been implemented as intended, and can help identify ways to improve implementation in the future. Schools may consider assessing the following as part of the process evaluation:

- Were water access points added in the school setting? If so, how many?
- Are cups provided at water access points? If so, how many cups were used? What was the cost of providing the cups?
- Where in the school were water access points added? Was one location used more than another?
- Have water promotion efforts been implemented? If so what are they?
- Has language on water access been added to the local school wellness policy or other school policy?
- Have school staff received training on providing, maintaining, and promoting drinking water in schools?

Outcome evaluation is used to assess if specific changes occurred as a result of implementing policies or practices. Depending on how many resources a school has for evaluation activities, a school may consider evaluating the following outcomes:

- Have students' perceptions of access to water among school settings changed?
- Have students' attitudes and preferences related to water changed?
- Have students' consumption of water and other beverages changed?

It is important to plan an evaluation that can be used to further improve policies and practices. This includes identifying what will be evaluated, how the evaluation will be conducted, who will conduct the evaluation, who will analyze the data, how the data will be reported, and available resources. The goals and objectives that have been developed as part of the water access implementation plan will guide the evaluation design, including what information should



be collected. Common data collection methods include questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, document reviews (e.g., policy analysis) and observations. Use of more than one source of data may be needed to measure specific goals and objectives.

At a minimum, schools should revisit their completed [Water Access Goals and Objectives template](#) annually to monitor progress. If an objective was not met, discuss why it wasn't met, and what might be needed to ensure that it can be met in the future. If it is determined that the objective is still important and can likely be achieved, consider adding it as an objective for the following year. Schools may consider partnering with evaluators at universities, local or county health departments, school districts, or state departments of education and health to identify methods and resources for conducting a more complex evaluation of their water access efforts.

Additional information about conducting a successful evaluation is available:

- <http://managementhelp.org/evaluation/program-evaluation-guide.htm>.
- <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework/index.htm>.

