



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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To: Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent of Schools
From: Dr. James Hall, Chief Operating Officer
Date: October 15, 2021
Re: Water Dispensers/Fountains Analysis

The Facilities team has looked at various ways to improve dispensing water at schools because the use of bubblers is problematic in a COVID-19 environment. To address this issue, much bottled water has been provided to students through the meals program, which has resulted in an abundance of plastic waste. The Facilities team looked at emplacing bottle filling stations, like those planned for the new Lowell High School, as a way of addressing this problem.

On October 30, 2021, the EPA awarded 6.215 million in grant funding to Boston Public Schools to provide filtered water fountains and bottle filling stations to schools. This was part of an initiative to remove lead from water in disadvantaged communities as part of a \$40 million effort through the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act. Boston Public Schools was one of ten grantees. Over 3 school years, BPS plans to install 1,400 new filtered water fountains and bottle filling stations in schools to replace 5-gallon water coolers in schools in 87 buildings which serve 40,000+ students and staff, or about 2/3 of the entire District. To be eligible for this grant, Boston had to commit \$10.34 million in matching funds over 3 years. Accordingly, the project amounts to \$16.54 million over 3 years (see [Boston Public Schools Awarded \\$6.215 Million Grant from EPA](#)).

If we just purchased water bottle dispensers for each school and installed them just in hall/communal areas at an estimated cost of about \$3,000-\$4,000 per unit, we estimate the cost to be \$550,000.00- \$600,000.00. However, to achieve what Boston did, it could cost up to \$5.5 million dollars. It is recommended that input be gathered from the City and from experts on our water system.