

A young boy with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a grey puffer jacket and a black backpack, is smiling and giving a thumbs-up while using a blue and white Flowater water dispenser in a school hallway. The dispenser has a digital screen and a water tap. The hallway has a polished floor and colorful decorations on the walls.

CASE STUDY

# PROVIDING SAFE HYDRATION & RESTORING TRUST IN SCHOOLS

OAKLAND, CA

A CASE STUDY: OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT (OUSD) x  
FLOWATER



# CHALLENGES

Before FloWater's implementation, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) faced a series of critical challenges related to water access and quality, including:

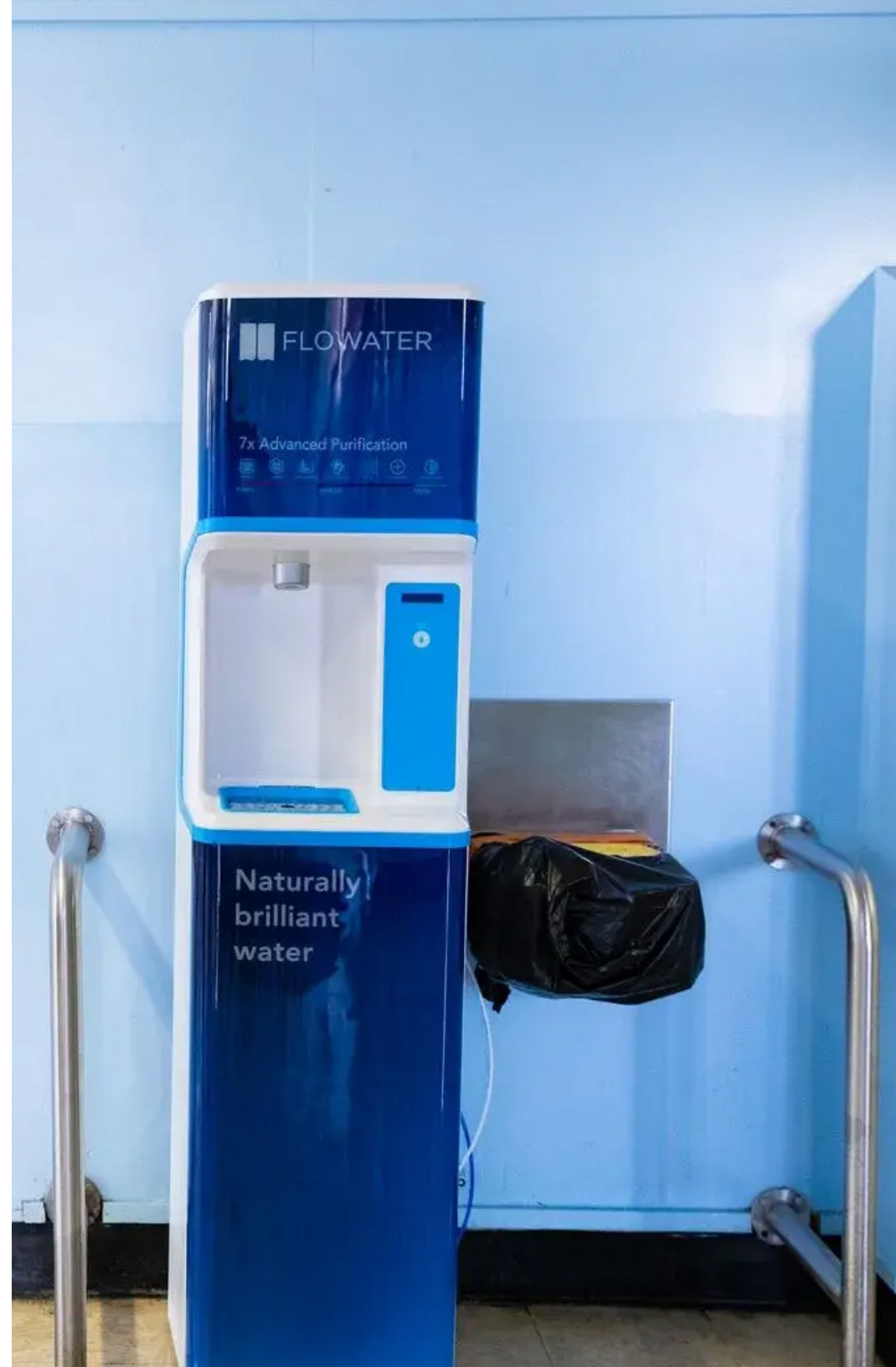
- + **Lead Contamination & Poor Water Quality:** Water tests revealed lead and other contaminants in school drinking fountains, eroding community trust in the District's ability to provide even the most basic safety — clean drinking water.
- + **Access:** Families and staff lacked confidence in whether their children were safe at school, especially when it came to something as fundamental as hydration.
- + **Health & Wellness Barriers:** Schools struggled with students opting for sugary beverages over water, contributing to health concerns, lack of focus, and poor academic performance..
- + **Inconsistent Solutions:** Across the district, existing hydration hardware varied widely in both availability and performance. Some schools had safe drinking water, while others did not, resulting in inequity and uncertainty.
- + **Inadequate Staff Hydration:** Teachers and staff — working long, demanding hours — weren't hydrating enough due to limited access to clean and appealing water.
- + **High Maintenance Costs:** Previous solutions were difficult to maintain and required costly servicing, further stressing limited budgets.



# SOLUTION

OUSD sought a consistent, district-wide hydration solution that was safe, sustainable, and trust-building. They found that solution in FloWater and a multi-year partnership.

- + **Initial Partnership (2018):** OUSD and FloWater began working together to pilot Refill Stations across select campuses.
- + **Sugar Beverage Tax Funding (2019):** Utilizing funds from the Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Distribution Tax, OUSD scaled deployment of FloWater Refill Stations, with the dual goal of increasing water intake and reducing sugary drink consumption among students.
- + **Ongoing Deployments (2020–2024):** Continuous orders demonstrated the district's long-term commitment to the program as early results showed increased hydration and positive reception from families and staff.
- + **Donor-Supported Expansion (2024):** With help from Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation (Steph & Ayesha Curry), Kaiser Permanente, and the TomKat Foundation, OUSD purchased additional FloWater Refill Stations after the community demanded a district wide solution.
- + **Future Growth (2025):** OUSD is on track to achieve a 200:1 ration at each school, of students to FloWater Refill Stations, across the district utilizing school, state, federal and donor support.





# BUILDING TRUST THROUGH TRANSPARENCY

What set OUSD apart was its dedication to transparency. **The district built a public-facing dashboard showing:**

- + The number of FloWater Refill Stations installed at each school
- + Real-time updates on campus-by-campus water testing
- + Progress toward the district-wide goal of a 200:1 student-to-station ratio

**“We are dedicated to ensuring that all students and staff have access to clean, lead-free, purified water at each campus. We will continue to pursue state and federal funding to go above and beyond that base ratio, as funds are available.”**

## Water Testing Protocol

On February 28, 2018 the Board of Education adopted **Board Policy 3511.3 Clean Drinking Water**. This policy requires the district to replace or remediate sources of consumable water that contain lead levels higher than 5 parts per billion (ppb). Previously, the district had been adhering to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommended action level of 15 ppb. This testing and replacement work began in the Summer of 2017.

After testing, if elevated levels of lead are discovered, elevated fixtures are shut down until they are fixed. The outlets are fixed or replaced and then they are retested prior to being reopened for usage.

Please see our 2024 testing timeline

## About Lead Levels

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of California set the action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb) for lead in drinking water. OUSD has set a more strict standard of 5 ppb.

According to State Water Resources Control Board recommendations, if the lead level in a drinking water sample collected from an outlet at a school is:

1. **5 ppb or lower** (within the District's limit), No action necessary
2. **Above 5 ppb and below the State and Federal limit of 15 ppb**, Outlet removed from service to be fixed
3. **Higher than the State and Federal Limit of 15 ppb**, Outlet removed from service to be fixed

## Water Testing Protocol

Water Testing Protocol
Timeline
Community & Family Resources
Frequently Asked Questions
Water Filtration Systems Dashboard
About FloWater
Contact Us

## Water Filtration Systems Dashboard

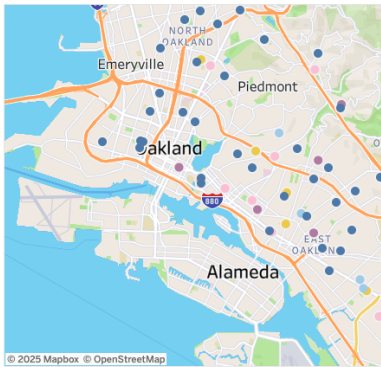
OUSD is dedicated to ensuring that all students and staff have access to clean, lead-free, purified water at each campus in the District. To ensure we are being transparent with the community about our water sources, we are providing access to this dashboard, which shows the quantity of Flowater Water Purification Systems at each campus. As we continue to increase the number of Water Filtration Systems at our schools, including Flowater and other systems that we will also test, we will update this dashboard, with the end goal of achieving a 200:1 ratio at each school, of students to Water Filtration Systems. We will also continue to pursue state and federal funding to go above and beyond that base ratio, as funds are available.

Map View Table View

## Map - Drinking Water Stations

(Data as of 4/25/2025. Including Brita, Elkay, FloWater, Haws)  
24-25 Goal: <=200 students per filter  
25-26 Goal: <=100 students per filter

School Board District Network  
(All) (All) (All)



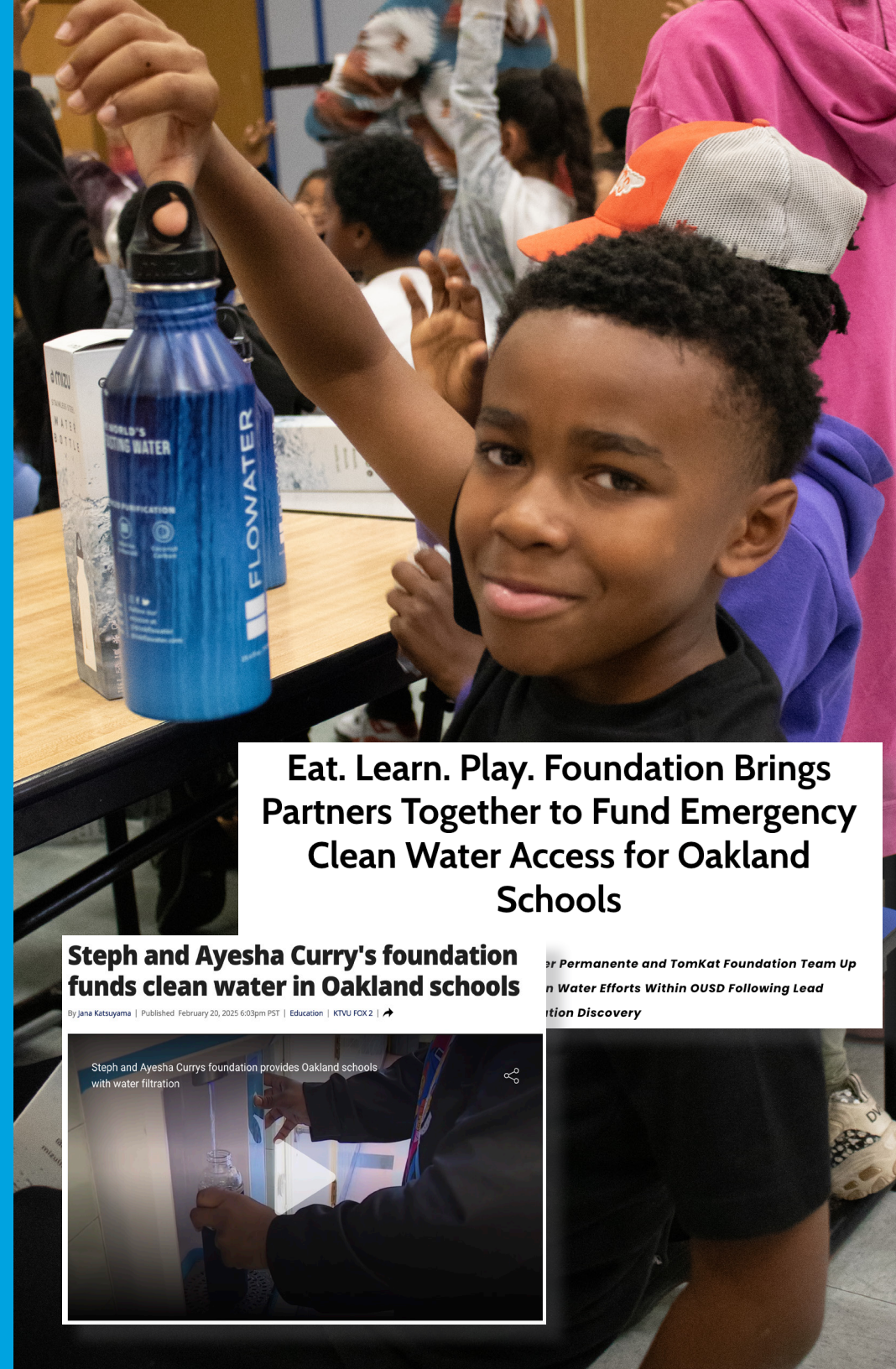
Ratio Category	# of Schools
100 and lower	15
101-200	31
201-220	5
221-250	9
251-300	8
301 and higher	8

# IMPACT

- + **Safer, Healthier Campuses:** With lead-free, 7x purified water, students could hydrate confidently, leading to improved wellness and learning outcomes.
- + **Community Confidence Restored:** Transparency tools and before-and-after testing helped restore faith in the district's commitment to student health.
- + **Environmental Win:** Millions of plastic bottles eliminated from landfills, aligning with broader sustainability goals.
- + **Equity & Consistency:** Every school, regardless of zip code, gained equal access to the same high-quality hydration hardware.
- + **Staff Wellness:** Teachers and employees reported feeling more energized and appreciated, thanks to reliable access to performance-grade water.
- + **Positive Press:** The donation by top organizations delivered positive attention on a local and national level for OUSD. This level of awareness helped renew public interest in water equality for kids as well as inspire other districts to pursue similar funding avenues.

**"FloWater isn't just a hydration solution — it's a trust solution. It's helped us rebuild relationships with families and show them we're committed to doing what's right for kids."**

– OUSD Facilities



## Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation Brings Partners Together to Fund Emergency Clean Water Access for Oakland Schools

### Steph and Ayesha Curry's foundation funds clean water in Oakland schools

By Jana Katsuyama | Published February 20, 2025 6:03pm PST | Education | KTVU FOX 2 | [➔](#)

er Permanente and TomKat Foundation Team Up  
n Water Efforts Within OUSD Following Lead  
tion Discovery

