

# Safe Water Engineering

## Safe School Water Quality

[Stagnant water in schools and childcare facilities allows water quality degradation](#), contributing to multiple contamination risks in school drinking water. These include loss of disinfectant residual, microbial growth (such as legionella), lead and copper leaching, and disinfection byproducts. The unprecedented shutdown of these facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic has created conditions for water quality degradation. Young children are at greatest risk of health effects from lead and some microbial contaminants. Staff over 50 are at greatest risk of exposure to legionella bacteria. After prolonged shutdown, carefully planned water quality restoration procedures are necessary to ensure building occupants have access to the water they need to stay healthy. Drinking Water Management Plans are a great way to thoughtfully and systematically address water quality in school buildings in both uncommon and more traditional times.

Safe Water Engineering provides the following services:

- Design water sampling plans in cooperation with school facilities staff
- Interpret sampling results
- Assist with accurate communications about water quality to staff and families
- Assist facilities staff in the development of [flushing plans that follow Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy guidance](#)
- Advise on addressing lead and copper in school drinking water
- Compile materials into [School Drinking Water Management Plans](#)

For an overview of school water quality issues, Elin Betanzo gave a presentation on this webinar, [“Safe School Water: COVID-19 and Beyond”](#) hosted by the Natural Resources Defense Council.

**About the company:** Based in southeast Michigan, Elin Betanzo is the founder of [Safe Water Engineering LLC](#), a small consulting firm improving access to safe drinking water through engineering and policy consulting. Her specialty is bridging the gap between policy development, implementation in the trenches, and public communication. In August of 2015, Elin helped uncover the Flint Water Crisis by encouraging pediatrician Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha to conduct a study that discovered elevated lead levels in children living in Flint, Michigan. She has 20 years of drinking water experience including work at the Environmental Protection Agency, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, and the Northeast-Midwest Institute. Elin is a Professional Engineer and a certified water operator.



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