



American Restroom Association

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“Ten Things to do NOW to get your School Ready for Students in a COVID-19 World,” released by the ARA

School restrooms forgotten in re-opening discussion

Catonsville, Maryland, USA (July 14, 2020) — The American Restroom Association (ARA), the USA’s advocate for the availability of clean, safe, well-designed public restrooms, has just released important guidance for the nation’s K-12 schools: [“Ten Things to do NOW to get your School Ready for Students in a COVID-19 World.”](#)

The guidance is a collaboration between ARA and Project CLEAN (Citizens, Learners, and Educators Against Neglect). Tom Keating, Ph.D., is the coordinator and founder of the project (projectclean.us). He says, “I’ve watched hours of national and state briefings on COVID-19 and read many, many articles about the efforts to re-open schools, but no one talks about students and bathrooms. If we couldn’t keep them stocked with soap and paper towels in normal times, what does that mean for today? We must get the conversation moving in that direction.” Dr. Keating has been an advocate for better school restrooms since 1995. His career as classroom teacher, school district lobbyist, school board member, and author spans forty-five years. He serves as a Board Member for the American Restroom Association.

The return to school must address school restrooms, says the ARA. Dr. Steven Soifer, co-founder and current President of ARA, and professor of social work at the University of Mississippi, concurs, “These ten simple undertakings will make sure we do not let our children down. Do schools need reminding to keep soap and paper towels and working faucets available? Unfortunately, yes. But, the ‘Ten Things’ also hit on how the school community can make restrooms a priority – especially in these COVID-19 times.”

Project CLEAN and Keating are at the forefront of this charge. Dr. Keating continues, “Even in the best of times, the general state of our school restrooms has been embarrassing and a disservice to our young learners. These ten activities are important for helping schools meet the enormous challenge of re-opening.” The activities ensure supplies are available and lay out ways for the entire school community to address the new mandate for personal and community responsibility to limit the spread of the coronavirus.

In addition to the “*Ten Things to do Now*” resource, ARA makes resources available on its website to assist parents and citizens lobby for improvements in school restrooms. According to Keating, school wellness programs must focus not only on **E**ating well and **E**xercising, but also on what he calls the third “**E**” – **E**limination. “Funding is available for wellness and, by extension, restroom improvements. It’s time for parents, wellness professionals, and educators to step up.”

Download the COVID-19 guidance document and additional School Wellness Policy resources at <https://americanrestroom.org/better-school-restrooms/>.

About American Restroom Association (ARA): a nonprofit founded in 2004, ARA advocates for the availability of clean, safe, and well-designed public restrooms. Accomplishments include successfully advocating for enforcement of and revisions to the International Plumbing Code, congressional testimony on gender equity in public restrooms in US Federal Buildings, and representing the USA in educating international audiences at Summits and Conferences of the World Toilet Organization (WTO). ARA brings together a multidisciplinary team from architecture, engineering, education, academia, and social work. Learn more at <http://www.americanrestroom.org> and <http://projectclean.us>.

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