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Water Shutoffs in Detroit Schools are Symptoms of a Bigger Infrastructure Challenge.

The start of the school year usually marks a hopeful beginning for many communities, but [reports of contaminated water in Detroit schools](#) are just the opposite. After testing for elevated levels of lead and copper in drinking water, sixteen schools exceeded safety guidelines, which resulted in [shutoffs across the entire district](#). And just this week, more reports have surfaced on [several other districts across the country](#) with similar water quality challenges. Over the coming months, students, teachers, and their families must contend with bottled water, dry water fountains, and lingering health concerns.

These school districts are just another example of where inadequate testing and decades of underinvestment have resulted in water infrastructure that is aging or susceptible to widespread failure (or both). By now, stories of cities like Flint and New Orleans are etched in our national consciousness, as pipes and other facilities struggle to provide safe, affordable, and reliable service, let alone be prepared to stand up to a mounting number of climate pressures.

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The Brookings Institute

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