



## Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

### INDOOR AIR QUALITY TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS UPDATE

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#### News and Events

- Interested in learning more about taking action on asthma in your community? If so, register today for EPA's **Communities in Action for Asthma-Friendly Environments** [National Asthma Forum](#) held June 4-5, 2009, in Washington, D.C.
- Is your school in the initial stages of implementing the *IAQ TFS* Program? Has your school made significant progress toward implementing an IAQ program? If so, then for **apply for a [Great Start](#) or [Leadership Award](#) to get recognition for your investment in school health and facility sustainability**. Applications for these awards are accepted year round, so apply today to demonstrate your commitment to environmental health to your students, staff, and community!
- **Is your school energy smart?** [ENERGY STAR's K-12 program](#) offers a wealth of information and resources for schools looking to spend less on energy and more on educating students. [Use their innovative Portfolio Manager tool](#) to evaluate your school's energy performance and [visit their Web site](#) to learn how your school can become more energy efficient.
- The [Indoor Air Quality Scientific Findings Resource Bank \(IAQ-SFRB\) Web site](#) has been updated! The IAQ-SFRB Web site, developed by the EPA in cooperation with the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, is an **unparalleled resource for anyone who seeks scientific information about the effects of IAQ on people's health and work performance**. The IAQ-SFRB Web site is easy to navigate and is updated regularly; [discover this important resource](#) today!

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#### Reduce Energy Costs While Maintaining Healthy IAQ

Rising energy costs and their impact on your school budget may have you wondering how you can save energy and continue to effectively address IAQ. Well, look no further—with a little forethought, organization, and armed with knowledge, you *can* conserve energy and maintain healthy IAQ.

*"Uniting energy saving measures and efforts to maintain healthy IAQ pays off with lower energy bills and healthier, higher-performing students. I want schools to know that to attain one of these goals, you do not have to abandon the other. You can accomplish both by arming yourself with knowledge, committing yourself to your goals, and using creative strategies to accomplish them. There will always be crises, budget or otherwise—if you keep your priorities in order, you will always come out on top."*

*—Kenny Foscoe, Connecticut School Indoor Environmental Resource Team*

## Update #17, April 14, 2009

The Connecticut School Indoor Environmental Resource Team (CSIERT) works with schools to help balance energy conservation needs with IAQ management priorities to ensure student and staff health, comfort, and productivity. CSIERT's experts share their tips for saving energy and maintaining healthy IAQ below.

### Did you know?

- **For every temperature degree you adjust on your thermostat, energy costs go up or down 2-3%.** For example, keeping your thermostats at 68 degrees instead of at 72 degrees—a 4 degree difference—can represent a 12% energy savings overall. Try to keep thermostats between 68 and 70 degrees during the heating season and at around 78 degrees in warmer months if the building has air conditioning. Go one step further by installing night setback programming that includes vacation weeks and holidays and programmable thermostats in areas like the cafeteria, gym, and auditorium to minimize use of heating and cooling systems during low occupancy periods.
- **Lighting accounts for nearly 50% of the electric bill in most schools.** Start simple: turn off the lights when they are not in use. To ramp up your efforts and increase energy savings, evaluate your school's lighting needs. Remove unneeded light fixtures near windows, especially in unused corners or along banks of windows. Hallways are often over-lit. Take a two-pronged approach by phasing in energy-saving light bulbs and fixtures that are ENERGY STAR approved.
- **Blocked vents prevent airflow.** At first glance, a heating and cooling unit may seem like a great place to put that bulky encyclopedia collection, but resist the temptation! Keep heating and cooling units clear of clutter and keep bulky items, like bookcases, at a distance so they don't block air flow into the room. Be sure outside unit ventilator intake vents are clear as well.
- **An HVAC system is only as strong as its weakest component.** Or rather, as efficient as its most inefficient component. Make sure air filters and belts are well-maintained and systems controls are calibrated correctly, including clocks, timers, and switches. Check outside dampers to make sure they are not leaking and are operating properly. When possible, replace old, inefficient electric motors with newer, more energy-efficient models.
- **Involving the whole school can create energy savings.** When everyone in a school bands together to conserve energy, the savings add up. Schools with highly effective conservation programs report utility bill reductions of as much as 25%! In Montgomery County, MD, the [School Eco Response Team \(SERT\) program](#) offers a great model that other schools can follow to engage the entire school community in energy saving. While you're at it, teach your school's newly-formed, student-run eco response teams how to identify potential IAQ problems; you'll get twice the impact from the effort.

CSIERT has a fact sheet, "[Maintaining Good IAQ While Conserving Energy](#)," that includes these and other tips, as well as a [Daily Energy Conservation Checklist](#) that you can use to evaluate energy use in your school buildings. [Other resources are also available](#) through ENERGY STAR's K-12 program.

Most importantly, don't feel overwhelmed: focus on one task at a time and you can accomplish all of your school environmental health and energy conservation goals.

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## Insight into Excellence: North East Independent School District, 2008 Excellence Award

North East Independent School District (NEISD) took a no-holds-barred approach to environmental health by launching a multi-faceted IAQ management program that included integrated pest management, chemical clean-up, radon gas mitigation, lead-based paint testing, and an asthma management program. The district organized and integrated all of the program components into the newly-founded Department of Safe and Healthy Schools. They admit it took a lot of work to coordinate all of these efforts, but the fruits of their labor speak for themselves: **an extensive chemical clean-out program led to the removal of 23 cubic yards of**

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**chemicals, average daily attendance increased 0.3% for the 2007-08 school year, and new clutter-free classroom protocols improved IAQ while reducing cleaning time by as much as 50%.** To ensure their program is sustainable, the district provides all new faculty and staff with comprehensive IAQ and asthma awareness training. NEISD's next goal is to realize a 1% increase in average daily attendance during the 2008-09 school year. By continuing their aggressive, proactive, and multi-faceted approach, we know that NEISD will accomplish its goal.

What makes your school IAQ management program excellent? Apply for the National Excellence or National Model of Sustained Excellence award to share your success story. The 2009 application period will launch soon; in the meantime, check out the [Awards Web site](#) to learn more.

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## School Building Week 2009

In celebration of our nation's schools, the Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI) coordinates School Building Week, an annual program that increases public awareness of the vital connection between the school building and student learning.

School Building Week features a week-long celebration where each day has a different theme:

- **Monday, April 27** – *Healthy Schools Day* - observed by communities throughout the country to highlight the need for improved indoor air quality and protection of children's environmental health at schools;
- **Tuesday, April 28** – *Historic Schools Day*;
- **Wednesday, April 29** – *Senior Citizens in Schools Day*;
- **Thursday, April 30** – *Schools as Centers of Community Day*; and
- **Friday, May 1** – *School Building Day*.

For suggestions on how your school district can commemorate the week, visit [www.cefpi.org/sbw](http://www.cefpi.org/sbw).

### Student Involvement in School Building Week

The centerpiece of School Building Week is the **School of the Future Student Design Competition**, which offers an opportunity for teams of middle school students to plan and design or redesign their schools to enhance learning, conserve resources, be environmentally responsive, and engage the surrounding community. Challenged with a design problem and encouraged to think creatively about designing tomorrow's green schools, the students engage in hands-on learning, bridging the gap between conceptual theory and real life skills. The students follow a planning process from the concept phase to the completion of a formal school building design project.

The competition is rigorous. Each participating school team is partnered with a mentor – a technical advisor and role model who provides help, assistance and serves as a sounding board for the teams, careful not to direct the design, but to offer paths for investigation. Students' teachers and mentors participating in the School of the Future Design Competition utilize the award-winning curriculum work together to develop the students' knowledge base regarding indoor air quality, energy management, energy efficiency, water conservation, solar, and wind power. The first-place regional winning teams travel to Washington, D.C., for the final jury process, awards ceremony, and cash prizes.

**Registration for the 2010 School of the Future Student Design Competition is open.** Please go to [www.cefpi.org/sbw](http://www.cefpi.org/sbw) and sign your school up today!

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### Have Your Questions Answered!

Is there a topic you want to see covered in an *IAQ TFS* Update? Need more information or have a quick question? Do you have suggestions for a Webinar, an Update feature, or are simply curious about an IAQ topic and would like more information? If so, send us an e-mail at [IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com).

**Share YOUR news and events!** Send us information to share with the school IAQ community. It could be featured in the next Update. E-mail your news to [IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com).

If you like what you're reading, maybe a friend or colleague would too—forward this e-mail! To subscribe to *IAQ TFS* Updates, send an e-mail to [IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com) with "subscribe" in the subject line.

The *IAQ TFS* Program is a comprehensive resource to help schools maintain a healthy environment in school buildings by identifying, correcting, and preventing IAQ problems. Learn more about the *IAQ TFS* Program at [www.epa.gov/iaq/schools](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools).

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