

Co-Sponsors



[www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org](http://www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org)

Monday, April 26, 2010



Healthy Schools Network



For Immediate Release: Thursday, April 22

**Making Every School Healthy for Every Child:  
Advocates Unite with Governors, Agencies,  
Districts, Teachers, Nurses, Legislators**

**For more information:**

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**Media:** For list of 55 national, state, and local events in the U.S. and Canada, as well as co-sponsor and event contacts, please call Coordinator Mollie Coleman, or view the **Map of Activities** listing on the website: [www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org](http://www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org). **Please interview co-sponsors and event hosts. Four national organizations are launching major new Healthy Schools Programs.**



*Note: event registrations will be updated online at [www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org](http://www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org) throughout the week of April 26-30.*





- **Lisa Jackson, Administrator, US EPA**

“We're proud to join so many dedicated partners in sponsoring National Healthy Schools Day. EPA’s mission is to protect the American public where they live, work and play – and that certainly includes protecting children where they learn. Our nation's children, parents, and educators deserve to know that their schools provide a safe and healthy environment. We encourage everyone concerned about healthy schools to use National Healthy Schools Day as a spring board to improve our school environment both indoors and out.”

- **Dr. Henry Falk, Acting Director, National Center for Environmental Health / Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

“CDC is pleased to join the Healthy Schools Network and its partners in sponsoring the 2010 National Healthy Schools Day. CDC’s mission is to create the expertise, information and tools that people and communities need to protect their health – through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats. CDC understands and supports the need for parents, students and school personnel to have access to healthy indoor air quality in schools and encourages communities to use the National Healthy Schools Day as a means to promote dialogue about healthier schools throughout the nation.”

- **Vernice Miller-Travis, Vice Chair, Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities**

“From the days of *Brown v. Board of Education* in the 1950's, the condition of America’s schools has been acknowledged as a deep and enduring equal justice and civil rights issue. Today, while we celebrate the hard work of many schools and others, we must also acknowledge how far we still need to come to ensure that every child—every child—has a healthy school that is clean and in good repair.”

- **Amy Garcia, Executive Director, National Association of School Nurses**

“School nurses celebrate the advances that have been made in the public awareness about the school environment that affects the health of children and staff. This provides an opportunity to focus on the gap that still occurs between what is best for children’s health and learning and the school environment.”

- **Jerald Newberry, Executive Director, National Education Association Health Information Network**

“NEA’s teachers and education support professionals know how important a healthy school is to learning. The NEA is proud to support National Healthy Schools Day on April 26. Working together we can spark the changes needed to make every school a safe and healthy place for students and staff.”

## Unhealthy Schools: Background

In the U.S., there are 55 million children and seven million adults in the nation’s 125,000 K-12 schools, many of which suffer from polluted indoor air, due to multiple factors, such as poor construction or ventilation, use of hazardous materials indoors, inadequate sanitation, siting near hazards, or the misuse of pesticides or other toxic chemicals. The effects on children and staff are profound. Federal and state agencies and the research community are aware that unhealthy indoor environments in schools erode health, learning and productivity, increase risks and health care costs, well as increase asthma absenteeism.

*Sick Schools 2009: America’s Continuing Environmental Health Crisis for Children* (online at [http://www.healthyschools.org/SICK\\_SCHOOLS\\_2009.pdf](http://www.healthyschools.org/SICK_SCHOOLS_2009.pdf)), assembled and released by more than 35 groups nationwide in December 2009, is a major source for state by state data profiles, snapshots of common concerns, estimates children at risk, and reform policies in place or underway. The Appendix of the report cites numerous studies, reports, and conference proceedings, as well as federal data sources.



## National Healthy Schools Day 2010

This year, **10 national and 45 state and local activities** are taking place to promote Healthy Schools Day in the U.S. and Canada. *Note: the inclusion of an event listing does not imply endorsements from the co-sponsors, but it does indicate the range of issues impacting School Indoor Air Quality, thus child and adult environmental health, and the pressing need to improve the environmental conditions of schools while seeking better educational outcomes.*

### New National Programs to Enhance Actions

New national educational programs are being launched in honor of National Healthy Schools Day by the **National Association of School Nurses** (member survey on environmental conditions), the **American Association of School Administrators** (guide to overcoming challenges), the **National Education Association Health Information Network** (online courses on asthma and indoor environmental quality), and the **Collaborative for High Performance Schools** (scorecard for improving existing schools).

### Sample State and Local Activities Show Commitment

US EPA Region 3 Office (**Philadelphia**) is hosting a webcast for its the region on green cleaning in schools; **California** Department of Health is issuing its second annual awards to schools helping to reduce asthma absenteeism, while other partnered programs are releasing a new guide to green cleaning for local schools; Jefferson County (**Louisville, KY**) Public School system is adding new elements to its national award-winning program; **New York Legislature** is honoring facility directors and schools that have won awards while elsewhere schools are inventorying cleaning products; vendors in **Maine** are introducing green cleaning products; **Missouri** Department of Health will collect radon detectors from schools; the **Pennsylvania** State Education Association is distributing posters, decals, handbooks, and lesson plans to more than 190,000 school personnel; while Governor Barbour of **Mississippi** and Governor Riley of **Alabama** are on the record with Proclamations supporting school air quality; **Charlotte- Mecklenburg** (NC) School system is releasing its new Environment Management System required by board policy; and dozens more events are taking place and available to the public in **Alabama, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington** and **Canada**.

### Quotes from Co-sponsors:

#### *Media Interviews Also Recommended*

- **Judy Hoskens, REFP, President, Council of Educational Facility Planners International (MN/AZ)**  
“The Council of Educational Facility Planners (CEFPI) applauds the Healthy Schools Network for their outstanding coordination of National Healthy Schools Day events around the country, offering an opportunity to promote and celebrate healthy and productive learning environments. CEFPI believes that reinforcing the connection between school facilities and student learning through School Building Week events such as National Healthy Schools Day creates greater public awareness of the importance of healthy school environments that enhance student and teacher performance and well being as well as community vitality. Encompassing effective indoor air quality management programs, a healthy, high performance school combines the efforts of all the stakeholders to provide the kinds of learning environments that will instill the creativity, innovation and critical thinking skills necessary for student success.”
- **Laura Abulafia, Director, Environmental Health Initiative, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DC/CA)**  
“AAIDD strongly believes that all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have the right to live, work, learn, worship and play in environments that are healthy and safe. This is particularly the case for children with special needs. Children may be at greater risk of harm from environmental toxins. They are generally exposed at higher levels than adults, and may absorb toxins more readily than adults. Children also metabolize and eliminate toxins from their bodies at different rates than adults, sometimes more slowly. Longer residency time of a xenobiotic, or foreign chemical, in the body facilitates greater toxicity and harm. Children, especially those who may have additional vulnerabilities such as developmental delays or intellectual/learning disabilities, may be more at risk to indoor toxic exposures.”
- **Dan Domenech, Executive Director, American Association of School Administrators (DC)**  
“As school system leaders, members of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) set the pace for academic achievement and student welfare. Our members know that the condition of school facilities can impact the ability of children to hit the mark. With the support of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), AASA has been addressing indoor air quality and healthy school environments for several years. Schools that are environmentally safe are key to student learning and student and staff health and well-being. AASA supports National Healthy Schools Day and encourages each of our 13,000 members to evidence their commitment to a healthy school environment every day.”
- **Susan Wooley, PhD, CHES, Executive Director, American School Health Association (OH)**  
“Children spend more hours in school than any place other than their homes. The schools they attend need to have a healthy environment – one that is dry, clean, and quiet and has good indoor air quality. Because funding

for school buildings is public money, we all have a responsibility to see that public funds result in schools with air quality that does not contribute to health problems such as asthma. The American School Health Association believes that every day should be a healthy school day for every child.”

- **John Gayetsky, Environmental Management Specialist, Association of School Business Officials-International (OH)**

“Poorly managed indoor learning environments compromise the health, performance and overall well-being of every school occupant while reflecting poorly on the operations and maintenance departments, school business officials and district administrators ultimately responsible for ensuring overall environmental quality. Safe, healthy, high performance learning environments actually improve student and staff performance, increase district revenue, reduce unplanned operational costs and disruptions, minimize risk, and improve the health and wellbeing of students, teachers and staff. The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) is committed to providing school business officials and district administrators with training (live and Web-based), on-site technical support; and information necessary to optimize the quality of the learning environment, and learning experience, to the benefit of all district stakeholders.”

- **Jay Feldman, Executive Director, Beyond Pesticides (DC)**

“The vulnerability of infants and children to the harmful effects of pesticides continues to attract national attention. Schools from across the country document a growing trend to adopt safer pest management strategies that do not rely on toxic pesticides, providing children with a healthier learning environment. Communities are also acknowledging the health and environmental risks of antimicrobial cleaning agents such as triclosan. Because of its link to resistant bacteria and adverse health effects - including asthma, cancer and learning disabilities, triclosan has no place in the classroom. In absence of a federal law, some states and local school districts have attempted to provide children the protection they need from hazardous pesticide exposure while at school, yet the level of protection is uneven and inadequate across the country, with the majority of children left unprotected. There is no reason to expose our children to hazardous pesticides and cleaning agents. The tools and experience are available to ensure an environmentally safe school environment for children.”

- **Scott Kessler, Programs Manager, Schools and Child Care Settings, California Breathing, California Department of Health (CA)**

“California’s public school system includes approximately 6.4 million students in over 9,800 schools and over 1,000 school districts. Thirteen percent of all public school students in the nation attend California schools, 33% more than the next largest state, and 49% of California students are identified as low income. There are also over 600,000 adults working in California schools. Against this statistical backdrop, California schools and colleges have suffered \$18 billion in budget cuts over the past two years. In this environment, finding cost-effective solutions to improve school environments is more than desirable: it is essential. The Healthy Schools Network and National Healthy Schools Day greatly help in the effort to improve school environments in many significant, yet inexpensive, ways. That is an important contribution.”

- **William "Bill" R. Orr, Executive Director, Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS)**

“We have a responsibility to future generations to ensure the health of our planet and our kids. Investing in high performance schools does both. With over 125,000 existing schools in the US, we need to start focusing on assessing and improving the schools that most of our kids already attend. This National Healthy Schools Day, the Collaborative for High Performance Schools is proud to launch the Operations Report Card, an affordable online tool that will help all schools become high performance schools.”

- **Scot Case, Executive Director, Eco Logo (PA)**

“Last week was Earth Week where we spent time focusing on the global environment. Healthy Schools Day allows me, as a father, to focus more locally on my children’s immediate environment. My children spend more time in school than anywhere else other than home. I want their school environment to be as healthy as possible. Eco Logo, the Healthy Schools Network, and many others are working together to improve our children’s environment.”

- **Linda Chipperfield, VP of Marketing and Outreach, Green Seal (DC)**

“A healthy breakfast is a great start, but kids also need healthy air quality at school to do their best. Teachers, parents, administrators and staff also benefit when a school is cleaned with the health of its occupants and the environment in mind. Green Seal, Inc. is proud to partner with the Healthy Schools Network and we look forward to a time when every day is a Healthy Schools Day.”

- **Deborah Moore, Executive Director, Green Schools Initiative (CA)**

“Schools are the ecosystems where our children spend most of their time. Kids and staff are exposed to all kinds of toxic chemicals at schools, from cleaners to pesticides, from building materials to art supplies. These toxins affect their health, attendance, and academic performance. Nowadays we have a full range of safer, cost-effective green alternatives, so it’s easy to be green. Why should we keep exposing our kids to these dangerous chemicals at school? We should have green and healthy schools for all – now!”

- **Mary Ann Stewart, President, Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association (MA),**

“Massachusetts PTA supports National Healthy Schools Day on behalf of our children, our schools and communities. Our position on Environmental Health and Safety commits us to support, expand and improve

efforts to maintain and modernize school facilities. Our School Governance position calls on parents to become knowledgeable about the operations of schools and to take part in school-based decision-making. We urge our members to join parent-staff teams to identify clean-up/fix-up projects, to adopt green cleaning policies, and to be involved in developing high standards for safety and wellness policies.”

- **Jennifer A. Lowry, MD, Pediatric Pharmacology and Medical Toxicology, Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, Mid-America Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (MO)**

“The Mid-America Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit supports the efforts of the national Healthy Schools Network in their efforts to make our schools a healthier place to learn. A clean environment is much more than a clean surface or what we see. It encompasses all senses such that the air students breathe and smell, the noises that are heard, and the objects that they touch are healthy. A clean and healthy environment promotes optimal learning and a good working environment. In addition, the steps required to improve the health of the school are cost effective. As children’s health, including those with asthma and other environmental illness, are affected by the health of their environment, the MAPEHSU encourages health care professionals to become involved promoting National Healthy Schools Day and continue to be an advocate in children’s health – where they live, play and learn.”

- **Earl C. Rickman, President, National School Boards Association (VA)**

"School boards are acutely aware of the importance of ensuring that children are taught in healthy environments. National Healthy School Day is an excellent opportunity to focus attention on the environmental health of schools and the health of the people who learn and work in schools. Together, we must support healthy schools, healthy communities, and healthy children."

- **Art Bode, Executive Director, National School Plant Management Association (OK)**

“The National School Plant Management Association is proud to support all efforts to make our nation's schools the healthiest environments in which our children can spend time. As a nation we must be responsible and dedicated to healthy, safe and sustainable learning environments. On this National Healthy Schools Day the members of our association are attending the national conference and trade show which is focused on these important topics. The membership will carry the lessons learned back to their districts and to others in their state. It would be our hope that every school district uses this day to reflect on what they can do to act responsibly and ensure each and every school is as healthy as possible.”

- **Kathleen M. Donahue, Vice President, New York State United Teachers and Vice President American Federation of Teachers (NY/DC)**

“Healthy Schools Day is a great opportunity to highlight the importance of clean, green and healthy schools. It is vital to promote schools that are environmentally safe and free from harmful toxins.”

- **Renee Hackenmiller-Paradis, Environmental Health Program Director, Oregon Environmental Council (OR)**

“Protecting our children from exposure to toxic chemicals in school is critical for ensuring healthy, safe environments that allow them to reach their full potential. Even at relatively low levels, toxic chemicals can cause or make worse asthma and other respiratory ailments, in addition to many other problems such as increased risk of cancer, heart disease, and impaired neurological development.”

- **James P. Testerman, President, Pennsylvania State Education Association (PA)**

"Students learn best and achieve their full potential when they are physically, socially, emotionally, and academically safe - in safe and orderly classrooms. The National Health Schools Day initiative focuses on creating school climate that help children learn. PSEA is proud to co-sponsor National Healthy Schools Day and promote safe, clean learning and teaching environments."

- **Robert J. Geller, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, Emory University School of Medicine, and Director, Emory Southeast Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (GA)**

"Children spend many hours in one environment - school. They need a safe, healthy setting in which to thrive, learn and succeed. This has been a priority of our Southeast Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit for many years. An excellent school environment can improve academic achievement and children's enjoyment of school. A substandard school environment will interfere with learning and peer interactions at school. But as many as one-third of schools have substandard environments. Our current economic challenges hamper the abilities of many schools, and may allow some schools to deteriorate further. This is a false savings, one that we must resist."

- **Ellie Goldberg, M.Ed, [www.healthy-kid.info](http://www.healthy-kid.info) (MA)**

"Many parents cannot take it for granted that schools are the safe havens their children deserve. I encourage parent groups to use the inspiring hero stories online at [www.healthy-kids.info](http://www.healthy-kids.info) to break the silence unhealthy conditions at school. For example, the New America Media video "*The Fixer*" shows how PTA parents, teachers and my program’s 2010 Healthy Schools Hero Mark Tafolia resolved longstanding problems such as mold, electrical hazards, decrepit bathrooms, dust encrusted air vents and other hazardous conditions. Such model partnerships ensure cost effective action, mobilize resources, and set a high standard for healthy kids in safe schools."