

**2010 DoH Study: Schools Spike
Asthma Episodes & Costs
2008 DoH Study: Sick Schools**

Although New York State has education laws promoting healthy schools by requiring Indoor Air Quality Plans, Integrated Pest Management Plans and Prior Notice, and green cleaning, a 2008 New York State Health Department survey found, “Almost all (99%) schools reported dust or reservoirs of dust in classrooms, 84% reported mold or moisture problems, 42% reported potential exposure to diesel exhaust, and 40% reported pets...” (*Asthma and the School Environment in New York State, 2008*).

It gets worse: a 2010 New York State Health Department study of pediatric asthma hospitalizations found that children’s asthma episodes and their medical costs spike significantly on returning to school in the fall and remain high, then spike again after each vacation (*IJOEH, Vol 17, No 1 (2011) New York State Dept. of Health, Center for Environmental Health; University at Albany School of Public Health*)

New York State has led the nation in providing state-supported occupational health clinic services for workers, but has yet to track and report public health complaints from parents, or to provide appropriate services for children in harm’s way. **New York’s children need a system of preventive public health resources tailored to their needs.**

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INTERAGENCY AGENDA:

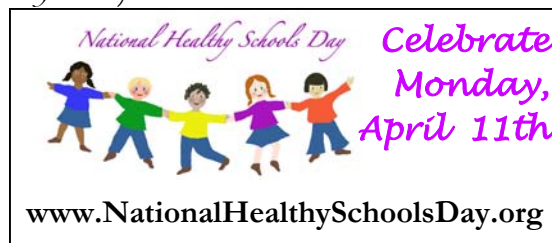
Help Children; Help Schools Save \$

Policymakers must set goals for inter-agency collaboration that protect and enhance children’s environmental health at school and in child care centers. Education officials especially need to rely on other agencies for expert help. The lack of action from public health and environment agencies deprives children of environmental health protections and isolates the educational system.



Studies show that children who learn and play in healthy environments are sick less often, miss less seat time and fewer school days, and are more attentive. These benefits are particularly important for the highest risk, poorest children who appear to lack the buffering capacity to overcome added environmental stressors.

While schools are facing enormous pressures to improve attendance, achievement, and productivity, they must have oversight on environment.. Health, Environment, and Education agency collaborations are crucial to ensure that outside expertise is utilized to help foster healthy school environments. (*NASBE news, Commentary, January 2010*)



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HEALTHY SCHOOL DESIGN

High Performance School Design Standards for All School Construction

New York should require NY-CHPS standards for school construction:

school siting, purchase, repair, remodeling, and construction to adhere to healthy and high performance standards based on **NY CHPS** (Collaborative for High Performance Schools), that “designs-in” a healthy indoor environment, providing enormous benefits in attendance and achievement.

A cost-benefit analysis found that **healthy indoor environments save more money and create more benefits** than energy savings (*Greening America's Schools*, Gregory Katz, www.cap-e.com, 2006).

NY-CHPS, developed by NYSERDA and the NYS Education Department, is the nation's best “green” school design manual. CHPS also provides an Operations Manual and Operations Report Card for phasing in “green” elements during renovations.



It is now time for all children, teachers and school personnel to benefit from NY-CHPS and healthy and efficient school design.

SCHOOL SITING REFORM

New York State must enact legislation to stop waste: protect all children in the state, including children in New York City and other urban environments, from environmental hazards resulting from **schools located on, in, or close by toxic or otherwise hazardous or wet sites.**

The legislation should be aligned with US EPA's new federal guidelines for school siting that take into account hazardous sites, highways and transportation corridors. Public participation is crucial to local prior use determinations. Hazardous sites and siting are uniquely DEC responsibilities: DEC must make information readily available, ensure that children's health is factored into decisions, and provide training and oversight to State Education and to districts.

New York State must also **close the NYC-School Construction Authority loophole** that exempts leasehold facilities from environmental site reviews. While this expedites construction, it is far more costly to remediate contaminated school sites after they open or to close down toxic schools.



GREEN PRODUCTS IN SCHOOLS

Build on success: New York should require school to buy-green. In 2005 New York State led the nation in requiring its agencies and all public and all private schools to use certified green cleaning products, a step which saves money for local schools and reduces chemical pollutants indoors, including “asthmagens”. In 2008, the state embraced Executive Order #4 on Green Procurement. The state's Sustainability Council reported in 2010 that implementing green purchasing quickly saved taxpayers well over \$100 million, while reducing toxics in use.

New York can now move the cost-savings and toxics-reduction benefits of green procurement into the K-12 education sector: enact a law requiring SED to participate in the State's Sustainability Council and require schools to “buy green” products, services, and equipment— such as computers - - vetted as green and cost-effective by the Council.