



Coalition *for* Healthier Schools

*...providing the national platform and
the forum for environmental health at school, since 2001...*

Coordinated by Healthy Schools Network

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 21, 2012

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COALITION FOR HEALTHIER SCHOOLS RELEASES 2012 ACTION KIT

Protect EPA Healthy Schools/Children's Health Programs from the Fiscal Cliff of Sequester

(Albany, NY) Today, the Coalition for Healthier Schools, coordinated by Healthy Schools Network, released the national Coalition's 2012 *Action Kit for Back to School and Beyond* for parents, educators, and activists to use to boost federal and state and local policies to address the dark, dank, dirty conditions of too many schools, and to improve children's health and ability to learn, as well as improve staff productivity. US EPA's healthy schools programs, including its premier *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools* and the *School Chemical Clean Out* programs, have endured not only recent cuts, but EPA faces the newer threat of losing 8-9% of its overall funding if the President and Congress fail to reach a deficit-cutting agreement and the sequester law takes effect. The Action Kit contains several tools for activists working to protect EPA's schools-focused programs and children's health to improve school environmental health and safety, including:

- Coalition for Healthier Schools Policy Statement
- Indoor Air Quality Checklist
- Green Cleaning Checklist
- Town Hall Meeting Action Items
- Election Officials Meeting Tips
- Calendar of Upcoming Events
- Federal Resources
- Sample Letter to the Editor
- Sample Op Ed
- Must Read Research Studies

"Every parent, every school administrator, and every health, education, environment, and children's advocate needs to be well-informed and well-equipped to make the case for healthy schools with great indoor air quality," said Claire Barnett, Coordinator of the national Coalition for Healthier Schools and Executive Director, Healthy Schools Network. **"This Action Kit will be invaluable to millions of parents in thousands of communities as well as to state and national advocates as the Coalition urges full budget and staff resources for EPA's critical programs that help states and schools protect children from exposures."**

Tolle Graham, the Healthy Schools Coordinator at MassCOSH (Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health) added, **"The Back to School and Beyond Action Kit offers parents, school staff and administrators a year round roadmap of activities and resources that can help**

bring teams together in schools and assist Coalition efforts on the state and national level focused on improving environmental conditions to promote health and learning.”

Added Charlotte Collins, Vice President of Policy and Programs, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, **“Indoor air quality at schools can affect the learning environment when mold, ventilation, pests and smoking trigger asthma and allergies. Communities must intervene to improve school buildings and policies so that students and staff can spend less time sick at home and more time in schools.”**

Each school day, over 55 million children and 7 million adults — 20% of the total U.S. population and 98% of children—spend their days inside school buildings. Unfortunately, too many of our nation’s 130,000 public and private schools are “unhealthy” buildings that can harm their health and hinder learning. To promote child and adult health, improve education, and create healthier communities, all schools should:

- adopt high performance design and siting standards,
- promote and sustain quality indoor air,
- use third-party certified green cleaning and maintenance products,
- use non-toxic products for instruction,
- use safer pest and weed control that reduce or eliminate pesticides (IPM),
- provide quality lighting, including more natural light,
- provide good acoustics and noise control,
- select durable, easy-to-clean flooring,
- offer wholesome food and exercise opportunities,
- provide safe spaces for outdoor activities
- build or retrofit facilities for energy and other resource efficiencies, and put a priority on remediating lead, CCA, PCBs, radon, and mold infestations, and clean out old, outdated or mislabeled chemicals in science labs and art rooms.

About the Coalition for Healthier Schools and Healthy Schools Network

Convened in 2001, and coordinated by Healthy Schools Network, the Coalition provides the national forum and platform for environmental health at school, through networking conference calls, meetings, and joint reports and actions. Healthy Schools Network, founded in 1995, is an award winning nonprofit and the nation’s leading voice for children’s environmental health at school. For more information, see <http://www.healthyschools.org/coalition.html>.

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Additional Statements of Support

National Association of School Nurses

Linda Davis-Alldritt, MA, BSN, RN, FNASN, FASHA, President

“School nurses appreciate the advances in public awareness about the school environment and how it affects the health and wellness of children and staff. The school environment should be clean and safe. School nurses promote an environment that prevents illness, keeps children focused on their

educational task and ready to learn, and supports academic success for all children. Healthy children learn better.”

- **Alliance for Leadership & Interconnection (ALI-Ohio)**

Ginny Frazier, Executive Director

Cincinnati (Ohio) Public Schools and its children and staff have benefited from adapting EPA guidance on school environments to our local needs, but this work is not nearly done. We fully support the need for EPA voluntary guidelines and grants for state agencies, districts and NGOs to use promote healthier and greener schools for all children. Children are 100% of our future and we must not ever shortchange their health or their education.

- **American Association of School Administrators (AASA)**

Dan Domenech, Executive Director

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) supports a healthy and safe environment for children and staff. For years, AASA has joined children, parents, teachers and other educators throughout the nation in observing National Healthy Schools Day to highlight the need for improved attention and protection of children’s environmental health at school. AASA encourages full budget and staff resources for the Environmental Protection Agency’s critical programs that help school districts sustain healthy indoor environments and protect children from exposures.

- **Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)**

John Musso, CAE; Executive Director

The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International is pleased to support the *Back to School and Beyond Action Kit*. ASBO International continues to promote safe and healthy learning environments in districts across the nation. In this era of shrinking budgets amidst ever-increasing demands and expectations, ensuring the health and safety of our nation’s schools must remain a high priority. The kit will help us continue to promote healthy learning environments and will serve as an invaluable resource for our members.

- **CT Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools (ConnFESS)**

Joellen Lawson, Founder

ConnFESS strongly supports the need for EPA guidelines and grants to state agencies and grants to nonprofits to advance healthier schools. EPA grants have helped educate Connecticut state agency staff, districts, schools, and NGOs statewide on the benefits of healthy indoor environments in schools. But not all schools are up to speed or even in compliance with state laws. There is clearly more work to do to fill policy and practice gaps.