



## ***IAQ TFS Connector Award Examples***

The *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools (IAQ TFS)* Connector is the primary networking and communication platform for the *IAQ TFS* Program. It encompasses the resources that EPA provides to promote interconnectedness and foster mutual assistance and support among the overall network of school IAQ and environmental health advocates, and *IAQ TFS* Program implementers. EPA's Connector resources include a listserv, e-newsletters, special events and additional, broad, national efforts that foster participation within the *IAQ TFS* network.

The National *IAQ TFS* Connector Award is designed to recognize individuals and groups whose actions and initiatives support improved school indoor environments in their community, state or region with a special focus on actions and initiatives that reflect the spirit of the *IAQ TFS* Connector.

Below are examples of activities that could merit a National *IAQ TFS* Connector Award. Though representative of award-winning initiatives, these examples are only a sampling of outstanding actions and initiatives that could merit an award.

A. **Janet Doe**, *School Nurse, Non-Existent Independent School District (NEISD)*. Concerned about her school's sky-high asthma rate, in 2003 Janet introduced a proposal for a comprehensive, district-wide asthma management and education program. Her research showed school administrators the relationship between school environment and student health, student and teacher absenteeism and productivity, absenteeism and state funding; and NEISD's asthma rate and their medical costs and attendance rates. NEISD's administration quickly approved her proposal, and Janet took the reins to develop the new program. Janet created a framework of objectives and worked with each division in the district to determine what priorities and policies needed to be made in each in order to support the program and create asthma-friendly learning spaces. When Janet met resistance, she organized a mediation meeting where major concerns could be aired and resolved. As a result of her hard work, Janet was able to develop solid working relationships that crossed traditional boundaries of authority, and ultimately was able to institute the district-wide program successfully. Now, every staff member receives ongoing asthma education and management training. As a direct result of Janet's efforts and the program, inhaler usage during school was reduced 55 percent over three years.

*Janet's story best exemplifies the Organize and Communicate Key Drivers. Janet structured the program to be results-focused and mission-oriented, communicating the program's value to everyone in the district. Her trainings helped people identify, in an informal and easy-to-understand way, the need to address problems at their source — one of the Six Technical Solutions — by removing and controlling triggers in the classroom. Janet's initiative was conducted in the spirit of the Connector because it brought people together, crossing boundaries of traditional authority. The initiative supported communication among staff and also among parents of asthmatic children in the district.*



Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools

National IAQ TFS Connector Award

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

**B. Joe Smith, John Johnson, Jack Roberts, Students, Made-up Science Club, Made-up High School.** During a weekly science club meeting in 2005, Joe complained about how his math room was so cold during his test that he could barely concentrate on the questions. The science club advisor told them that research had shown that several factors other than knowledge are known to affect student performance, such as noise. Inspired, Joe suggested the science club perform a study to determine if there was a correlation between temperature and student performance. With support from their advisor, Joe, John and Jack took the lead in designing the study. The students worked with teachers from the science department to coordinate testing, with a local university professor to design tests for students, and with the facilities department to discover how the room temperatures were controlled. After an initial round of testing, the students created a poster presentation of their study method, design and results and entered it into a local science fair. After receiving constructive feedback from the science fair judges, Joe, John and Jack made some changes to their study methods and designed a second round of testing. This time, Joe, John and Jack were able to demonstrate clear results that temperature did affect student performance. The science club worked together as a group to collect research on energy costs, the effect of temperature on student performance (including their own data), and other research to create a proposal and presentation to the school administration to create policies about classroom temperatures that are ideal for student performance.

*Joe, John and Jack's story best exemplifies the Evaluate Key Driver. Recognizing that environments can always be improved, they took initiative to evaluate what the best environmental conditions could be to enhance student performance. During their study, the group learned about the process of technical maintenance of classrooms and its importance to IAQ. Their initiative was conducted in the spirit of the Connector in that they worked with many different groups to network and form partnerships to be successful in their study. They communicated their research to a broad audience by entering it into a science fair. Once they made conclusions about their results, they took their efforts further to translate the results of their study into sustainable school policy.*

**C. Asthma Coalition of Mayberry, Mayberry, NC**

After several schools in their area failed at implementing long-term IAQ management programs, the Asthma Coalition of Mayberry (ACM) created an initiative to help schools coordinate the successful implementation of the *IAQ Tools for Schools* Program. The ACM played a coordinating and supporting role to help schools take the information contained in the *IAQ TFS* Action Kit and implement it in their school system. To support schools, ACM held trainings, first for IAQ Team members, and later for all staff. During these trainings, individuals learned why IAQ is important and how each of them can impact IAQ. Participants learned about the *IAQ TFS* Program and how the ACM planned to help their school make these important changes. As the initiative progressed, ACM developed an Asthma-Friendly School Award to offer incentives to schools that made difficult changes — such as regular dusting — but that were important for controlling asthma and the quality of the indoor air. Three years later, ACM has been able to award more than 300 schools in their area with the Asthma-Friendly School Award. More than 80 percent of the schools they work with are able to sustain their IAQ management programs after ACM's guidance. Due to the success of their initiative, ACM has begun to partner with the North Carolina Department of Education in order to share the program for statewide implementation.



Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools

**National IAQ TFS Connector Award**

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

*The ACM best exemplifies the Organize and Act Key Drivers. The ACM designed their initiative with clear goals, boundaries, definition of roles and objectives. ACM helped schools coordinate functions among departments and staff to get everyone working together to act and get results from their program. The ACM's initiative resonates with the spirit of the Connector because they helped to support a need in their community that allowed success — and sustainability — to take place. They helped make the initiative itself sustainable by cooperating with the Department of Education, where the success of the initiative can increase in depth and scope.*