

Celebrate Children's Health Month with Resources to Help Schools Become Healthier and Safer Places

We all know that children may be at greater risk from harmful environmental pollutants than adults. This is because a child's neurological, immunological, digestive, and other bodily systems are still developing. They eat more food, drink more fluids, and breathe more air than adults in proportion to their body mass, and their behavior patterns — such as crawling and placing objects in their mouths — may result in greater exposure to contaminants in their environment.

When we think about the environment, however, we probably tend to think about the “whales and the wilderness” or the “tigers and the trees.”



In reality, our environment is everywhere we are. Most of us spend a great deal of time indoors at our homes, schools, childcare centers, or workplaces.

This year during October, which is Children's Health Month, EPA is recognizing that school environments are very important for children, and is calling attention to the tools and

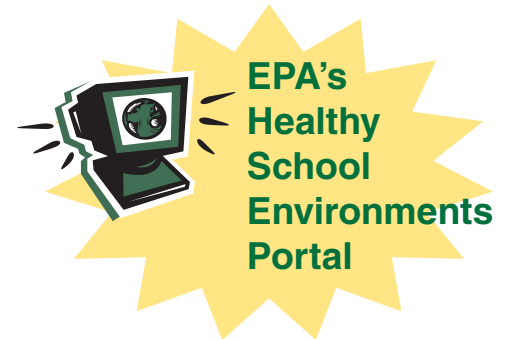
resources available for communities to improve school environments, address indoor air quality, and reduce exposures to chemicals and pesticides, ultimately making their schools healthier and safer places for children. All of EPA's tools and resources can be accessed through EPA's Schools Web Portal, <http://epa.gov/schools/>.

Check out the site and share with colleagues at your school and enjoy this edition of Healthy School News. We appreciate receiving feedback on these newsletters, so please let us know if you have any suggestions. Instructions for being added to the distribution list are at the end of the newsletter. Have a healthy and safe school year!

Sincerely,

Margo Young, EPA Region 10
Children's Environmental Health
young.margo@epa.gov
or 206-553-1287

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Hot Topic

EPA Releases Voluntary Guidelines for Selecting Safe School Locations

EPA just released voluntary guidelines to help communities protect the health of students and staff from environmental threats when selecting new locations for schools. More than 1,900 new schools serving approximately 1.2 million children and costing more than \$13 billion opened in the 2008-2009 school year. Major investments in our children's schools can be compromised if environmental hazards are not fully understood prior to selecting a school location.

The voluntary guidelines provide tools to help communities ensure that new locations for schools are environmentally safe and accessible to the students they are intended to serve. The potential impacts on children's health and education, as well as the damage to the community when school environmental hazards are later identified, are significant. In some cases, schools have been closed and in other cases have undergone costly remediation.

The voluntary guidelines give local communities tools to help them consider environmental health issues in establishing school site selection criteria and in conducting effective environmental reviews of potential school locations. The guidelines recommend involving the public in the site selection process from the beginning to ensure the community is engaged in the decision-making process.

More information on the voluntary school siting guidelines and on protecting children's health in existing schools can be found on EPA's schools website: <http://epa.gov/schools/>.

School Siting Guidelines Webinar Series

Location, Location, Location: New Guidance for Locating Schools in a Healthy, Sustainable Way

Tuesday, October 11th, 1:00pm Eastern

Join the National Center for Safe Routes to School for this webinar to learn about EPA's first-ever federal guidelines for locating school facilities and the model school siting policies for school districts. Discussion will include the use of the Active School Neighborhood Checklist developed by the Arizona Department of Transportation and the policy recommendations in *Helping Johnny Walk to School* from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

[Register now!](#)

Locating Schools for Better Health, Environmental, Fiscal, Equity, and Community Outcomes: Actions States Can Take

Tuesday, October 18, 2:00 pm Eastern

Join the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity to learn about the actions undertaken in New Hampshire and other states to encourage more community-centered schools, the first-ever federal guidelines for locating school facilities and how equity considerations could and should play a role in siting decisions.

[Register now!](#)

School Siting – How to Address the Environmental Justice and Preservation Dilemma

Tuesday, October 25, 2:00pm Eastern

Please join EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection to discuss how the new siting guidelines and other new guidance and tools, can help weigh the pros and cons of individual sites so that schools can meet all of a community's goals.

[Register now!](#)

A Live Chat on School Siting and Community-Centered Schools

Tuesday, November 1 at 2:00 pm Eastern

Seemingly simple on the surface, decisions about where to locate and how to use school facilities are actually complex. If you're confused, you're not alone. Pose your questions to a panel of experts in a "live chat room" about the new federal school siting guidelines, model policy for achieving healthier students and communities through school facilities, and actions states can take to align spending and encourage community participation. Leave with a new understanding of how community-centered schools are not only desirable but achievable.

[Register now!](#)



Feed people, not landfills – reduce your school’s food waste

The EPA’s Food Recovery Challenge (FRC) is a great tool to help you reduce your food waste. In the U.S. about 34 million tons of food waste is generated each year – that’s enough to fill the Rose Bowl to its brim every day! Food waste impacts:

- **The Economy**

- Food waste costs the U.S. about \$100 billion each year by increasing the cost of business.

- **Communities -**

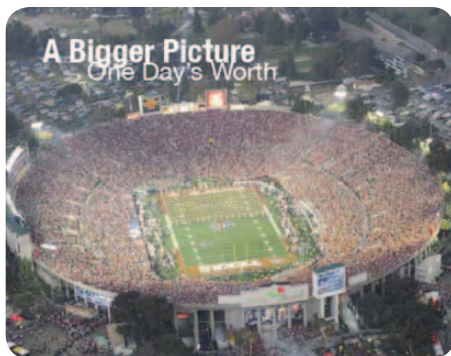
- Food insecurity impacts 50 million Americans, contributing to health problems. In Western Washington alone, 1 in 5 families doesn’t know where they will get their next meal.

- **The Environment -** Land-filled food waste produces methane, a greenhouse gas with 21 times the global warming potential of CO₂.

The FRC is a tool that you can use to reduce the negative impacts of food waste. Furthermore, the FRC can help you reduce your costs, feed your communities, and protect your environment. For more information or to sign up for the FRC visit <http://www.epa.gov/foodrecoverychallenge>.

The [King County Green Schools Program](#) has the following recommendations for preventing food waste at your school:

- Develop an educational campaign to encourage “take only what you can eat” and “eat what you take.” Also encourage students who bring lunches from home to bring home leftovers so that their parents can see how much food has been eaten and, if needed, reduce the amount packed in student lunches in the future.
- Recess before lunch. In schools where students have recess before lunch, less food is wasted.
- For additional resources and success stories from other schools who have implemented food waste programs, please visit: <http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/waste-reduction-toolkit.asp>.



Credit: Jonathan Bloom, Wasted food blog

Tahoma Green Team

By Tess Clinkingbeard, EPA Intern and Member of the Tahoma High School Green Team

In this time of perpetual budget crises, finding ways to save money is a must. Luckily, there are quite a few green ways to save some green. Tahoma High School’s Green Team saved the district \$24,000—just by implementing lunchroom recycling! They’ve taken it one step further, now the lunchroom (along with most others in the district) has food composting as well. This is taken to Cedar Grove Composting where it is made into new soil. With all the money saved, a small portion to spend on biodegradable trash bags is pennies. Also, by recycling, the 7,400 students in the district are learning about the importance of conservation and waste reduction. There’s dozens of small things to be done as well. Turn off lights when not in use, as well as computers. This saves loads of energy, which can cut back on your school’s electric bill. Turning down the thermostat, and not using the AC also saves quite a bit, especially in buildings as large as most schools. When trying to save money this year, look first towards greener solutions.

President’s Environmental Youth Award - Enter Your Project Today!

Encourage one or more students you know to apply and see what a difference they can make for the



environment with an award-winning project. Since 1971, the President of the United States has joined with EPA to recognize environmental stewardship efforts created and conducted by our nation’s young people. One outstanding

project from each EPA region is selected for national recognition. Projects are developed by young individuals, school classes (K-12), summer camps, and youth organizations to promote environmental stewardship. The deadline for submitting applications is December 31 of each year. For more information, contact Sally Hanft at hanft.sally@epa.gov or 206-553-1207.

Integrated Pest Management Saves You Money

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) will likely save more money than it costs and it's also vital in protecting children's health. IPM programs reduce unnecessary pesticide use and are more effective at pest control in an urban environment than conventional pesticide use. There are many documented cases where the costs have actually decreased over time.



IPM works by reducing sources of food, water, and shelter for pests and only using least-toxic pesticides when absolutely necessary. Benefits of IPM include: decreasing asthma triggers, insect bites and stings, possible disease vectors and the acute and possible long-term health effects associated with pesticide exposure.

Repair and maintenance activities may be required to prevent pest entry and to reduce pest-conductive conditions such as those caused by leaky pipes or inadequate garbage containers. In the long run, these activities will likely reduce overall costs of pest control and maintenance and operating budgets. Training costs may be absorbed in the school's existing budget by incorporating IPM principles into existing training. Finally, monitoring for pests in key areas such as in the kitchen and the teacher lounge is a cost-effective substitute for unnecessary, scheduled spraying of the entire building.

School pest management requirements differ depending on the state in which you live. In Oregon, a bill was passed that requires each school district to have a school IPM plan and a designated IPM coordinator by July 1, 2012. [Contact](#) your state's pesticide program office for more information on your state's school pest management requirements: <http://tiny.cc/stcx8>.

EPA provides more detailed information on school IPM and links to free publications on how to start a school program: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm/>. The Texas Agrilife Extension also has an online calculator to help your school develop their own budget for an IPM program: <http://www.ipmcalculator.com/>.

Please contact Juliann Barta at 206-553-1495 or [barta.juliann@epa.gov](mailto:juliann@epa.gov) for help with your program.

September School IPM 2015 eNewsletter Now Available

The IPM Institute publishes a monthly newsletter you may be interested in. September's [newsletter](#) features articles on "Contracting for IPM Services in Schools: How to Create Effective Partnerships".

Schools Learn Some Hard Lessons



Over the past few months, EPA has found a number of cases of asbestos contamination in schools in Region

10. In one instance,

school personnel removed ceiling tiles as part of a school project and inadvertently disturbed asbestos-containing dust. In another case, contractors hired by the school district removed asbestos floor tile without first identifying it as asbestos-containing material. EPA has also learned of volunteers who are being asked to sand and paint portions of their schools without proper safety precautions and training. Schools need to carefully consider repair and maintenance projects for school buildings to avoid potentially harmful exposures. Some approaches schools should use include:

- 1. Know The Age of Your Buildings**— Both lead and asbestos were used extensively in building products sold prior to 1978.
- 2. Get Professional Help if Pre-1978**— If you allow any untrained person to disturb pre-1978 building materials, there is a good chance you are exposing that person to both asbestos and lead and are doing something illegal.
- 3. Don't Make Assumptions about Building Materials**— There is no way for you to determine whether there is lead or asbestos in a building product by visual inspection. Specialized equipment and trained personnel are required.

To learn more about the EPA's lead & asbestos programs, go to <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or <http://www.epa.gov/asbestos>. Or contact Regional Lead Coordinator, Barbara Ross at ross.barbara@epa.gov or Regional Asbestos Coordinator, Maria Tartaglia at tartaglia.maria@epa.gov.

Do you want a free test of your school's artificial turf for lead? Contact Matt at turf@ceh.org or (510) 655-3900, ext. 318.

Learning Opportunities for Healthy Schools

School Buildings as Green Teaching Tools

Wednesday, October 19, 2011, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Eastern

This October, the National Environmental Education Foundation (www.neefusa.org) in partnership with the National Education Association Foundation (www.neafoundation.org) and Green Schools National Conference (www.greenschoolsnationalconference.org) is launching the first of a series of three webinars to help educators around the country learn from experts and peers how to green their schools and curriculum. Webinar participants will interact live with national experts and teachers who are transforming their schools for the 21st Century.

Register now at: www.classroomearth.org/gswwebinars. Registration is **free**.

Speakers:

- Jenny Wiedower, U. S. Green Building Council (USGBC) (www.usgbc.org)
- Sean Miller, Earth Day Network (www.earthday.org)

The first 100 registered participants that log in and complete the webinar will be eligible for a webinar drawing to receive a complimentary registration to the National Green Schools Conference (www.greenschoolsnationalconference.org), February 27-29, 2012 and a free copy of the groundbreaking book on green school design: "[The Third Teacher](#)," a collaborative project by OWP/P Architects + VS Furniture + Bruce Mau Design.

Stay tuned for additional webinars in the Green Schools Educator Series coming November 2011 and January 2012. Featured topics will include:

- Greening the School Yard: Gardens and Habitats
- Going Green through the Curriculum

For archived webinars on school environmental health topics, see the Peaks to Prairies webinar series at <http://peakstoprairies.org/library/webinars/> or EPA's Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools series at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/webconferences.html>.

Addressing Mold and Moisture in Tribal Schools

October 6, 2011, 2:00-3:30pm Mountain

Are you dealing with moisture and mold problems in your school? Join us to learn more about this important issue:

- Understand the difference between chronic and flood related moisture problems
- Identify the most common sources of moisture and mold.
- Learn how, where, and when to test for problems.
- Find out practical and cost-effective solutions to prevent & control issues in your school
- Learn what technical assistance and resources are available to help.

Space is limited. [Reserve](#) your webinar seat now!

Funding Opportunities

Due Date 11/8/2011

EPA's Office of Environmental Education is announcing a [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) for support of the Environmental Education Sub-grants Program for 2011. This is a new announcement that has not previously been distributed. This RFP sets forth the process that will be used to select a grant recipient who will develop and implement a project to make sub-awards to organizations to meet the specified expected environmental and educational results of the program. An estimated \$1.5 million is expected to be available this fiscal year. EPA plans to award one agreement for approximately \$150,000 in each of EPA's ten regions under this grant. Additional information may be found on EPA's environmental education grant website - <http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html>.



Department of Education Announces Green Ribbon Schools Program

This September, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan invited states to take part in the inaugural year of the Green Ribbon Schools program, which will recognize schools for reducing environmental impact on their communities, promoting healthy school environments for their own students and staff, and offering high-quality environmental education.

The program was developed by the Education Department with support and advice from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

The award aims to encourage energy and resource conservation measures that can lead to cost savings and job creation; environmental and behavioral changes to promote health and productivity among students, staff and other occupants; and the use of environmental and sustainability education to support students' preparedness for some of the nation's fastest growing employment sectors.

State education authorities will nominate schools based on their success in promoting healthy and sustainable environments and conducting environmental education. Nominated schools will also need to be in compliance with federal civil rights and federal, state and local health, safety and environmental statutory and regulatory requirements.

More information on Green Ribbon Schools can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2011/09/final-plans-announced-for-green-ribbon-schools/>.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

GreenRibbonSchools



Fall Webinar Series

Effective Policies to Eliminate Chemical Releases and Exposures in Schools

To promote a national framework for the prevention of chemical incidents in schools, the ATSDR [National Toxic Substance Incidents Program \(NTSIP\)](#) has teamed up with Interstate Chemical Threats Workgroup (ICTW) to bring you this exciting fall webinar series. During the sessions we'll explore policies and prevention efforts for three chemicals/chemical categories that lead the NTSIP incident list: elemental mercury, cleaning products, and pesticides. At the conclusion of the webinar series, the summary notes will guide the development of a white paper entitled, *Best Practices and Policies for Eliminating Chemical Releases and Exposures in Schools*. This paper will be distributed nationally and will serve as a basis of ATSDR's outreach to those who can effect change. If you are not an ICTW member, but would like to attend please contact Lori Copan at lori.copan@cdph.ca.gov.

Save the dates:

All sessions will begin at 12:30pm EST/9:30am PST and run for 75 minutes.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| October 13 th | Mercury exposures and effective policies |
| November 10 th | Green cleaning policies to eliminate exposures |
| December 15 th | Pesticide exposures and effective policies |
| January 12 th | Discussion on white paper development: "Best Practices and Policies for Eliminating Chemical Releases and Exposures in Schools". |

Session 1:

Effective Policies to Eliminate Mercury Exposures in Schools

October 13, 12:30- 1:45 Eastern

Elemental mercury is most toxic in its vapor form. It evaporates slowly at room temperature and more quickly when heated. Children are drawn to mercury by its silvery color and novel properties. Children playing with elemental mercury can be poisoned by breathing the vapor from mercury beads held in their hands or from mercury spilled on carpeting, furniture or other surfaces. The HSEES and NTSIP data have shown mercury to be the most frequently released substance in schools and very costly to clean up. This session will focus on the extent of the problem of mercury releases in schools and experiences with legislation and outreach to remove mercury from schools.

Roundtable Discussants:

- **Robin Lee**, PhD, MPH, ATSDR Division of Health Studies
- **Martha Stanbury**, MSPH, Michigan Department of Community Health
- **Wanda Lizak Welles**, PhD, New York State Department of Health
- **Sue Casteel**, BS, MS, ATSDR Regional Representative

What's Happening In Your State

Alaska

2011 Alaska School Health & Wellness Institute Pre-Conference Session

Monday, October 24th, 8:30am-12:00pm, Anchorage, Alaska

[Making the Connection: School Environmental Health and Student Performance](#)

Presenters: Steve Soenksen, Safe Routes to School; Leif Albertson, UAF Cooperative Extension Service; Mansel Nelson, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals; Troy Ritter, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Idaho

Idaho Chemical Roundup Program Continues!

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) Chemical Roundup program assists schools in adopting best practices for managing laboratory chemicals and wastes. IDEQ has assisted 63 schools in safely disposing of or recycling more than 7,700 pounds of chemicals. The program implements pollution prevention measures to prevent future accumulation of expired chemicals and generation of hazardous waste.

Schools in Idaho can apply to receive assistance from IDEQ staff to inventory and clean out excess chemicals. Funding announcements are anticipated to be released to coincide with the Idaho Science Teachers Association conference in 2012. For more information, contact Ben Jarvis at (208) 373-0146 or check out the program website at: <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/pollution-prevention/p2-for-schools/chemical-roundup-program.aspx>.

Oregon

2011 Annual Conference: Healthy Students, Healthy Schools

Friday, October 14th, 2011, Portland, Oregon

Join Oregon's experts in the field of school-based healthcare for an action-packed day of professional development, round-table discussions, education experiences and dynamic networking. SBHC practitioners, school administrators, youth leaders, advisory councils, and community advocates will focus on advancing access to quality health care for youth by sharing their knowledge and perspectives about best practices within their health centers and throughout their communities. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.osbhcn.org/conference11>.

Washington

Fall 2011 Workshops – School Environmental Health and Safety

The Washington State Department of Health invites local health jurisdictions and school maintenance, operations, facilities, custodians, nurses, risk managers, and administrators to [free workshops](#) designed to provide current information on school environmental health and safety issues. Clock hours and CEUs are available. To sign up or receive more information, contact Nancy Bernard at nancy.bernard@doh.wa.gov or 360-236-3072.

Healthy School NEWS is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10. Region 10 includes the states of Washington, Idaho, Alaska and Oregon and the tribes within those boundaries. For general information about school environmental health or to provide feedback on this newsletter, please contact Margo Young at young.margo@epa.gov. To be added or removed from the distribution list, please email pollow.george@epa.gov with your request. Contact Region 10's Public Environmental Resource Center, the education, publication and information gateway to EPA's Region 10 Office, for free publications and educational resources for your school. Call at (800) 424-4EPA or email epa-seattle@epa.gov.

EPA Environmental Education: www.epa.gov/enviroed/

EPA Children's Environmental Health: www.epa.gov/children