In 2000, Blue Valley School District (BVSD) launched an IAQ management program to address increased parent interest in environmental issues, counter the risks of a public relations disaster like the one that occurred when a neighboring district closed a school for IAQ problems, and ensure outstanding learning environments for their students. BVSD applied the IAQ Tools for Schools model to create a structure for facilities management that tied their existing programs together and leveraged resources to radically accelerate their progress. “Our program’s success didn’t materialize overnight. It started with a vision and expectation of excellence, and we have continued to push the program forward at every opportunity.” – Dave Hill, Executive Director, Facilities and Operations

**Organize for Success — Build an Effective Team:** BVSD created an interdisciplinary IAQ team that includes design and construction, safety, energy, operations and maintenance, and custodial functions. A designated IAQ coordinator leads the team, and everyone in the district knows he is the ‘go-to guy’ for IAQ. The team also includes an executive-level leader who relays the team’s goals and investment needs to the district’s strategic planning committee. “Before adopting IAQ Tools for Schools, we had a lot of successful, but…unrelated pieces in place for managing our environments…I AQ Tools for Schools gave us a framework for organizing; it provided the comprehensive approach we needed…to pull it all together, strengthen our existing practices…and get more out of our work.” – Dave Hill, Executive Director, Facilities and Operations

**Assess Your Environments Continuously — Use Technology:** Blue Valley uses technology to benchmark facilities, conduct routine monitoring, and save money and man hours by avoiding problems. “With regular inspections, we can detect potential problems before [they] become larger issues that require expensive repairs. By demonstrating the cost savings that preventive maintenance can deliver, we convinced the decision-makers that upfront technology investments made sense.” – Dave Hill, Executive Director, Facilities and Operations

**Plan Your Short and Long-Term Activities — Put Goals in Writing:** Blue Valley institutionalized their program by including IAQ goals in the district’s strategic plan and establishing metrics to evaluate their progress against goals.

**Communicate with Everyone, All the Time — Share Your Goals:** By tying the IAQ work to a goal that people care deeply about, BVSD was able to build the depth of commitment the IAQ initiative needed right from the start.

**Act to Address Structural, Institutional and Behavioral Issues — Educate Staff About IAQ to Change Behavior:** Blue Valley used training to cultivate a culture of stewardship and to create IAQ champions across the organization. All facilities staff members were trained to identify root causes of IAQ problems and to avoid cosmetic fixes.

**Evaluate Your Results for Continuous Improvement — Solicit Feedback:** BVSD asks occupants to rate the school’s indoor environment on annual surveys and aims to receive scores of at least four out of five from 100 percent of respondents.

**PROGRAM RESULTS**

- Fewer per capita IAQ concerns each year.
- Reduced operating costs through IAQ upgrades (e.g., $23,000 energy savings at one school in one year).
- Rise in test scores every year since program began (highest ACT scores in the state; four out of six of state’s top-ranked schools are in BVSD).
- Marked decrease in lost instructional time due to facility problems.