

National Healthy Schools Day

Celebrate and promote healthy and green indoor school environments for all children and staff.



For immediate release:

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14th Annual National Healthy Schools Day:

36 Partners in One Day of Action with a Big Message

Tuesday, April 5th is National Healthy Schools Day

(April 4, 2016, Albany, NY) - "This is the big message," said Claire Barnett, Executive Director, Healthy Schools Network. "Despite federal and state budget cuts and heavy pressures on our schools, Healthy Schools Day partners and participants are voicing their awareness and appreciation for the special training and work it takes to create and sustain healthy learning environments in every school for every child."

Across the US, there are 130,000 public and private K-12 schools enrolling some 55 million children and employing about 7 million adults. In all, about 20% of the total US population is in school every day. Yet, the Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) reports that half of all schools have problems with indoor pollution, complex problems attributable to various sources, such as poor siting or engineering, leaky roofs, deferred maintenance and repairs, and the use of toxic products indoors and out. Polluted indoor environments are already contributing to health and attendance problems. Specifically they contribute to rising asthma cases, asthma hospitalizations during the school year, absenteeism, and other health issues such as problems concentrating and headaches, as well as cancer and other long-term diseases.

This year, drinking water quality in schools has taken on new importance, as many communities are re-discovering: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/claire-l-barnett/back-to-the-future-clean-b-9582810.html>

David Rowson, MS, Director of the Environmental Protection Agency's Indoor Environments Division, said: "Healthy indoor environments and good indoor air quality in schools are vital to the health and education of our nation's children," adding "We appreciate the efforts of so many organizations and individuals across the nation working to raise awareness of this issue on Healthy Schools Day."

President of the Network's Board of Director's Chip Halverson, ND, of Oregon said: "In my work as a teacher and now a physician, I am working with children and adults every day who are adversely affected by the polluting chemicals they can smell, taste and touch. There are so many more kids enrolled today with disabilities it is hard to know where to start, but regardless of what's happening at home or the community, schools have an affirmative responsibility to reduce artificial barriers to learning by reducing the use of toxic products indoors and out."

Pediatrician Jerome A. Paulson, MD, FAAP, Consultant to Healthy Schools Network, added: "Children are our most precious resource. Why don't we do a better job of protecting them from environmental health hazards in schools?"

Daniela Kunz, a Tennessee parent and Founder and President, Parents for Students Safety said: "Indoor Air Quality and Chemical Safety are very important for our students. Grownups need to step up in protecting our children in schools. No Agency is at present responsible and in charge to go into a school to prevent/remediate/protect students from health damaging exposures. With the National Healthy Schools Day, we all can raise more awareness. It takes a village to raise healthy children and this is one of the fundamental components needed to do so."

Dr. Cary Sennett, President and CEO of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, said: "Schools must offer a safe, healthy and inspiring environment for both students and staff. As the leading advocacy organization for individuals living with asthma, food allergies or other allergic disease in the United States, we strongly support the National Healthy Schools Day and hope all Americans will help their school districts improve standards.

Linda Chipperfield, Vice President of Marketing for Green Seal, Inc., said: "Green Seal applauds the efforts of all involved in National Healthy Schools Day this year. The challenges our kids face from kindergarten through high school are tough enough without the added concerns of indoor air pollution and exposure to harsh chemicals while in class. Creating a safer, more sustainable school environment allows students to focus on learning while protecting their health in the process."

Ellie Goldberg, MEd, (Massachusetts) said: "Parents can't take it for granted that schools are the healthy places and safe havens we expect them to be. Too many schools, old and new, create or ignore poor ventilation, bad sanitation, mold, outdated or improperly stored explosives, flammables and other hazardous

chemicals, and many health and safety code violations. It can take enormous courage, persistence and creativity to overcome the status quo of indifference or limited resources. National Healthy Schools Day reminds us that parents and teachers need to be partners in making sure all students have the safe and healthy schools they deserve." www.healthy-kids.info

Kenny Foscue, of the Connecticut Department of Public Health and Chair of the Connecticut School Indoor Environment Resource Team, said: "We look forward to celebrating National Healthy Schools Day in Connecticut. Our statewide consortium, the CT School Indoor Environment Resource Team, chooses an annual 'CT Tools for Schools Hero,' and this year we will be honoring Alfred Pullo, the Woodbridge School District's Director of Business Services, at a ceremony on April 5th. Mr. Pullo has been a leader in building an innovative Tools for Schools Program to improve the health of students and staff. Many of the practices Mr. Pullo initiated are being adopted by other school districts around Connecticut, making him truly deserving of the CT Tools for Schools Hero award."

Kimberly Thomas, Executive Director, Plant Services & Custodial Operations of the Clarke County School District, described some of the Healthy Schools Day events taking place in Athens, Georgia: "Here in Athens, Georgia for the Clarke County School District, we will have several events that commemorate the National Healthy Schools Day 2016.

* The Clarke County School District celebrates National Healthy Schools Day with a recognition by the State of Georgia US Green Building Council. The Clarke County School District is the only district in Georgia that completed environmental sustainability initiatives in all 21 schools and administrative facilities and all schools will receive a "Green Apple Day of Service" award on April 5th in a district-wide recognition program. The school district also recently received the 2015 Green Cleaning Grand Award from American School and University magazine.

* School administrators will receive an Information Pack related to Classroom tip sheets for mold/mildew awareness and integrated pest management awareness.

The Healthy Schools Network is thanking and highlighting National Healthy Schools Day's 36 partners, including the US EPA, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the US Department of Education, the American Public Health Association, the National Environmental Health Association, and Moms Clean Air Force which is again co-hosting a National Twitter Chat. All partners and activities are listed at www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org

Examples of National Healthy Schools Day events include:

School District of Philadelphia - Philadelphia, PA - Classroom Decluttering, Chemical Clean-out and Asthma Friendly Schools Presentation – Week of April 5th, 2016

Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) - Lexington, MA - High Performance Schools Training Workshop – April 21st, 2016

Healthy Schools Network – National Healthy Schools Day Webinar: Children, Health Hazards, and Accommodations in School – April 7th, 2016

Healthy Schools Network – National Healthy Schools Heroes Named for 2016- April 5th, 2016

Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP) Initiative – Eugene, OR - Call Your School and Ask About Pesticide Use – April 5th, 2016

Healthy Schools Network is a 501c3 not for profit established in 1995 which has challenged the nation to make schools healthier learning environments for all children. For more information, see www.HealthySchools.org. To find out more about using green and healthy products in schools, see www.CleaningforHealthySchools.org

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www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org