

Happy Winter Everyone!

As we make our way through cold and flu season, I'm sure everyone is working hard to keep our schools clean and our staff and students healthy. This issue of Healthy School News has some good tips about cleaning your schools in effective and safe ways. There is also information about upcoming funding opportunities and trainings, and a special story about a new school in rural Alaska.

As always, please let us know if there are topics you would like more information about and have a safe and healthy school year.



Sincerely,

Margo Young
EPA Region 10 Children's Health &
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Hot Topic

EPA Wants Your Feedback on its New Draft School Siting Guidelines

Where our schools are located can affect the health of students, school staff, and everyone who uses school facilities. For example, how close a school is located to a busy roadway or a coal-burning power plant can affect the quality of the air, water, or soil at the school. Alternatively, locating schools near clean, green spaces, like parks, can have positive health impacts.

To help communities protect the health of students and staff from environmental threats and to select the safest locations for new schools, EPA has drafted new voluntary guidelines to provide a framework and approach to help communities consider and balance environmental risks and community benefits in siting new schools.

EPA developed this draft with the help of other Federal agencies, states, school districts, community organizations, health care professionals, teachers, as well as environmental justice, children's health and environmental groups, among others. EPA is also asking for your feedback on the guidelines. [Send EPA your comments](#) by 4 pm EST on February 18, 2011.

- [Read the press release](#)
- [Review the draft guidelines](#)
- [Get answers to your questions about the draft guidelines](#)
- [Download a .pdf file of the draft guidelines web site](#)



Illustration by Paul Hoffman from Back to School for Planners issue of Planning Comm'r's Journal copyright, Planning Comm'r's Journal

EPA Issues National Guidance to Address PCB-Containing Fluorescent Lights

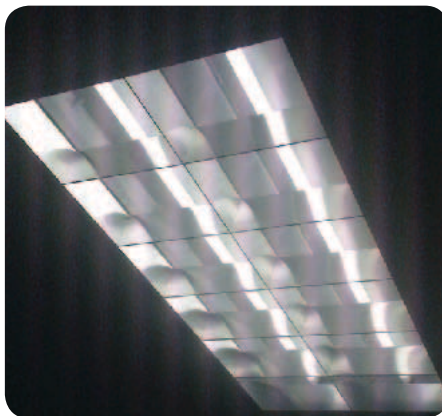
EPA recently released guidance recommending that schools take steps to reduce potential exposures to PCBs from older fluorescent lighting fixtures. The guidance is based on evidence that the older ballasts contain PCBs that can leak when the ballasts fail, leading to elevated levels of PCBs in the air of schools that should not represent an immediate threat but could pose health concerns if they persist over time.

The guidance document is available online at <http://www.epa.gov/pcb>.

Polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, are man-made chemicals that persist in the environment and were widely used in construction materials and electrical products prior to 1978. PCBs can affect the immune system, reproductive system, nervous system and endocrine system and are potentially cancer causing if they build up in the body over long periods of time.

Given their widespread use before they were banned, if a school was built before 1979 or has not had a complete lighting retrofit since 1979, the fluorescent light ballasts probably contain PCBs. Although intact and functioning

ballasts do not pose a health threat, these lighting ballasts will all fail in time. For that reason, EPA recommends older PCB-containing lighting ballasts should be removed, whether as part of a previously scheduled lighting retrofit program or a stand-alone project. While replacing lighting ballasts requires an upfront investment, there are state, federal and private funding programs available to potentially provide funding. In addition, replacing older ballasts with newer lighting fixtures will result in energy savings that will increase energy efficiency in schools and likely pay for itself in less than seven years, depending upon hours of operation and local energy costs.



EPA has also developed [information](#) on how to properly handle and dispose of PCB-containing fluorescent light ballasts and properly retrofit lighting fixtures to remove potential PCB hazards.

Contact Tristen Gardner, at EPA Region 10, for additional information or technical assistance at gardner.tristen@epa.gov or 206.553.6240.

Cleaning for Healthy Schools

Created by [Montana State University Extension Pollution Prevention Program](#)

Purchase green products and equipment

- The least toxic or green chemicals for the job
- Microfiber cloths and mops to pick up dust and dirt
- HEPA vacuum cleaners
- Unscented products...clean does not have an odor!
- Environmentally preferable paper and recycled/compostable trash can liners

Know what green really is

- Look for these words on a product label: an ingredient list, non-toxic, biodegradable, phosphate free, contains no dyes or bleach, recyclable containers
- Get help online from 3rd party green certifiers: EcoLogo, Green Seal, or EPA's Design for the Environment

Keep school rooms organized and clean

- Have a regular clean up time each week in the classroom
- Encourage frequent handwashing with soap and water

Adopt green cleaning procedures

- Establish a list of prohibited chemicals
- Provide classroom teachers with one approved all-purpose cleaner
- Use less product by spraying the cloth rather than the surface to be cleaned
- Use sanitizers & disinfectants only in frequent touch zones (door handles, keyboards etc.)
- Use walk-off mats at each entrance to keep the area clean
- Discourage air freshener



Learn more about green cleaning for schools!



What's Happening In Your State

Oregon

The Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative (SOSI) and the Oregon Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program recently partnered to increase opportunities to walk and bike to school. Safe Routes to School is a national program that brings together parents, schools, community leaders and government agencies to improve the health and well-being of children and communities by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school.

Idaho

The Idaho Division of Public Health received a grant this fall from EPA to implement the Tools for Schools Program in three school districts in Idaho. The Program includes working with the schools to: select an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Coordinator for each school or school district; conduct an IAQ walk-through assessment to identify asthma triggers and other indoor air quality issues; and select an IAQ work plan for the school or school district.

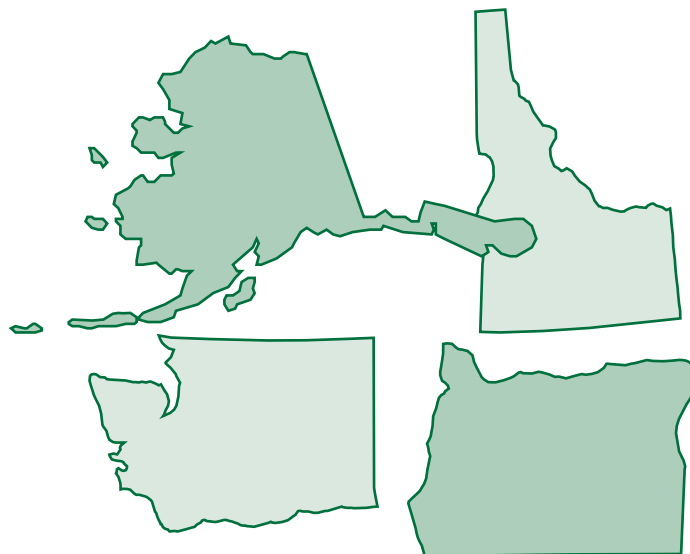
For more information, contact Jim Faust, Idaho Indoor Environment Program Manager, at 208-332-5717 or faustj@dhw.idaho.gov.

Washington

2011 Healthy Schools Summit, May 24-25, 2011, Seattle, WA. Registration opens February 1. Early bird rate applies on or before May 2, 2011: \$130 for one day; \$240 for two days. Scholarships (through March 1) are available to support registration. There is also transportation support available for those traveling over 100 miles to the Summit.

Alaska

A large contingent from Region 10 attended the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools Symposium in Washington, D.C January 13-15. Attendees learned about available resources and materials, including the IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit, that will enable them to support and implement good IAQ practices in schools. EPA staff are happy to share information they gathered at the Symposium, and Joan Tovsen, who specializes in outreach to Alaska Native schools, is a great contact for additional information on implementing the Tools for Schools program in Alaska. Contact Joan at tovsen.joan@epa.gov or 907-271-1481.



Washington School District Receives Indoor Air Quality Award

Northshore School District 417 of Washington State received an EPA National Excellence Award at the Tools for Schools Symposium, in Washington, D.C. in January, 2011. The District formed an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) team in the mid 2000s in an effort to improve IAQ throughout the district. Seeking to build a "best in class" IAQ management program, the district implemented the IAQ Tools for Schools Program in 2008 and has since fully engaged the Program's Framework and Six Key Drivers of Success in the pursuit of excellence.

Northshore's current IAQ program is truly a team effort, including students, teachers, staff, IAQ coordinators and administrators. This diverse participation in the IAQ program has enabled Northshore to provide innovative, meaningful and effective solutions to IAQ issues.

The district's IAQ initiatives range from a student-led emissions study to assess the impact of bus idling, to in-class training on IAQ risks and how to prevent them, to implementation of a comprehensive

preventative maintenance program to support IAQ goals. Through monitoring, analysis and reporting of IAQ program initiatives the district is able to evaluate progress to date, identify areas for future improvement and measure the program's long-term successes. The district has reduced reported IAQ issues to less than one per month per school, which represents a 40% reduction over previous years. Congratulations!

Funding Opportunities

Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) is a competitive grant program that offers an innovative way for a community to organize and take action to reduce toxic pollution in its local environment. Through CARE, a community creates a partnership that implements solutions to reduce releases of toxic pollutants and minimize people's exposure to them. By providing financial and technical assistance, EPA helps CARE communities get on the path to a renewed environment. Due date: for March 22, 2011.

Children's Environmental Health Grants

EPA is pleased to announce a solicitation for grant proposals to address children's environmental health in underserved communities. The grant will build capacity for these communities to reduce environmental exposures in child-occupied settings, including schools and child care centers. Funds available for award are expected to total approximately \$1.5 million, and EPA intends to award approximately 15-20 awards, each for an amount not to exceed \$100,000. The due date for initial proposals is February 18, 2011.

EPA's Environmental Education Grant Program - Go online to see information about the 2011 grant program. Click the "Grants Update" button to be notified when applications can be submitted. Contact Sally Hanft @ 206-553-1207 or hanft.sally@epa.gov for more information.

Indoor Air Quality Grants – Available in March. Visit the website soon to apply for this funding program that provides indoor air quality project support for schools, buildings, and homes. Contact Davis Zhen at 206-553-7660 or zhen.davis@epa.gov for more information.

Learning Opportunities

Peaks to Prairies Healthy and Safe Schools Webinar Series

EPA's Indoor Air Quality for Schools Webinars

- Prevent Air Pollution at the Source: Schools Chemical Cleanout
- State-Based School IAQ Management Initiatives
- Integrated Pest Management in Schools Webinar
- Managing Asthma in the School Environment Webinar
- Finding Solutions: The Virtual Walk-through
- Real Schools, Real Challenges — Finding Solutions with the IAQ Tools for Schools Framework and Connector

Free Energy Efficiency Assistance for Schools

Even a small school district can save big bucks by starting an energy efficiency program. Schools all over the country are making changes that are resulting in savings.

Loudoun County (VA) Public Schools
\$5.7 million saved

Council Rock (PA) School District
\$7.1 million saved in four years

Gresham-Barlow (OR) School District
\$1.5 million saved in 2009

Evergreen (WA) Public Schools
\$720,000 saved

Free help is available for districts thinking about starting an energy efficiency program. Get started today by contacting Jim Borthen, EPA's Energy Assistant Specialist for additional ideas, at borthen.jim@epa.gov or 206-498-1287.

Examples of free assistance available:

- **Washington State University Energy Extension Program**
WSU provides technical assistance to utility staff and commercial and industrial customers of the Western Area Power Administration in 15 western states. Call (800) 769-3756 or visit www.energyexperts.org.
- **Oregon Department of Energy-Schools Program**
Contact J.P. Batmale 503-378-5054 or jp.batmale@state.or.us
- **Washington State School Energy Improvement Grants**
- **Washington State General Administration**
Assistance with benchmarking, financing options, energy efficiency programs Contact Donna Albert 360-902-7248
- **Council of Educational Facilities Planners International**
 - Washington**
Kelley Tanner 206.461.6000
 - Alaska**
Michael Carlson 907.563.8474
 - Oregon**
Renee Kroupa 503.226.6950
 - Idaho**
Dave Teater dteater@mgtofamerica.com

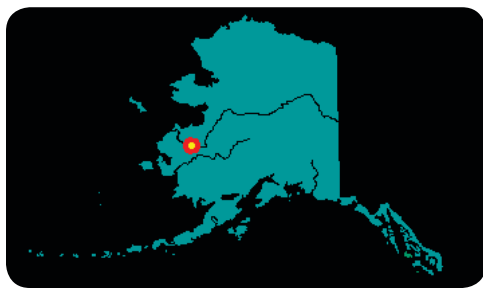
A Story from a Region 10 Healthy Schools Initiative

Indoor Air Quality in Remote Alaska

Story and photos by Joan Tovsen, Alaska Tribal Outreach Coordinator

On the banks of the Yukon River in rural Alaska, a new school opened its doors in the fall of 2010. The Russian Mission School combines kindergarten through grade twelve under one roof, and contains state-of-the-art facilities for 117 students in an Alaska Native village of 363 primarily Yupik Eskimo. As is true with many Alaska Native Villages, planes are used instead of road travel, and the river is both a highway for boats in summer and a surface for snow mobile travel after it freezes. Storms and inclement weather can limit access to and from

the village for weeks or months, so a subsistence lifestyle and sustainability mean survival.



learn with a strong focus on environmental and cultural place-based activities. Mahri Lowinger, EPA Tribal Coordinator, Joan Tovsen, Alaska Tribal Air Outreach Coordinator, and Sharon Kozevnikoff, RM Environmental Coordinator did an environmental health School Walk Through, shared resources from the [Tools for Schools Action Toolkit](#), and visited three teachers and their combined classrooms.

During the discussions, teachers expressed their appreciation for the environmental lessons included in the Tools for Schools Action Toolkit and identified ways to integrate these into their social studies and science curricula. In rural Alaska, open burning, landfill burns, and sewage lagoons cause challenging air pollution problems. Through collaboration and using the Tools for Schools program, the village hopes to ultimately improve respiratory health in this remote area.



New Russian Mission School



Russian Mission on Yukon River

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/
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