

Green Cleaning In Schools Is Cost Effective

“These green changes are making the job easier and safer for custodians as well as saving money. You can go green and not impact the budget.”

**Dave Fortin, Region 10 Building/Grounds Supervisor
Burlington, Connecticut Public Schools
(Bristol Press, October 2008)**

In Connecticut, Fortin has made a few simple yet powerful changes that make the cleaning process more effective, efficient as well as more fiscally and environmentally responsible.

He has done this by using:

1. New microfiber mops and cleaning cloths that pick up more dirt and can be laundered. Microfiber cleaning can reduce and/or eliminate the use of chemicals.
2. Concentrated, environmentally safe cleaners, hand soaps and detergents that reduce the number of plastic containers the school orders and saves money on shipping charges.

Hundreds of school districts across the country have switched from toxic cleaning products to safer alternatives. Here are just a few examples of school green cleaning programs that experienced no increased costs or significant cost savings.

For example:

Georgia

Replacing 20 different cleaning products with a single Green Seal certified cleaner, produced a \$280,000.00 annual savings at the Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville, Georgia. Green Seal certified cleaners keep 270 dorm rooms and 100 bathrooms clean.

Florida

After saving \$512.86 in one school during a 3 month pilot program, the Palm Beach County District began to phase in green cleaning into all of its 180 schools in June 2008. Projected annual savings for the entire district \$360,000.00.

Pennsylvania

The Northern Tioga County School District saved \$19,882.00 within one year by eliminating aerosols and other hazardous cleaning products. Ounce for ounce, aerosols often are more expensive than other cleaning solutions and emit harmful fumes that are inhaled by building occupants.

The CT Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools 888-420-5536 www.pollutionfreeschools.org
Endorsed by the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut www.safehealthycct.org

Illinois

From 2003-2004, the Chicago Public Schools tested its green cleaning program and found the price of Green Seal certified cleaning products were cost competitive with traditional products. This study also concluded that the vast array of cleaning products now available performed as well, if not better than traditional products.

Effective green cleaning and indoor air quality programs have been shown to reduce absenteeism which saves school districts money. The US EPA's IAQ Design Tools for Schools cites increases in Average Daily Attendance (ADA) as a primary benefit to schools with superior indoor air quality. "The majority of a school's operating budget is directly dependent on ADA, so even a small increase can significantly boot the operating budget."

For example:

Schools in **Syracuse, New York** documented gains in attendance of 11.7% which yielded added state funding of \$2,512,250.00 the first year after using a cleaning for health regime. The school district's use of high efficiency filter back pack vacuuming, systematic disinfecting of desks and surfaces were among the measures used in the program.

Lockport Township High School in **Lockport, Illinois** reported a 3 percent increase in the average daily attendance after the first year of implementing an Indoor Air Quality Management Plan that included switching to Green Seal certified products and changing to vacuums equipped with HEPA filters.

Charles Young Elementary School in **Washington, DC** implemented a green cleaning and indoor air quality program that resulted in an increase in school attendance from 89% to 93%.

School districts can purchase green cleaning products through their state procurement contracts, which can offer major discounts through bulk purchasing agreements. Such procurement contracts as well as buying cooperatives and the bidding process can offer cost savings to schools.

For example:

Massachusetts

Massachusetts was one of the first states to offer safer alternatives to toxic cleaning products through state contracts as a part of its Environmentally Preferable Program. An evaluation of its safer cleaning products demonstrated that the majority of these environmentally preferable cleaning products were less expensive than their toxic counterparts.