



Organize your committee

NYSUT is committed to ensuring that our collective voice is heard on all issues related to the health and safety of our school communities. One way this can be done is by working with our schools to establish effective health and safety committees. We encourage you to review this how-to guide to learn more about best practices and what the state law requires. If you have questions or need support, contact NYSUT’s health and safety specialist, Patricia Geisel at patricia.geisel@nysut.org.

Table of Contents

New York State Law Requiring Health and Safety Committees in Schools.....	page 3
Establishing a Health and Safety Committee.....	page 4
Regulation Requirements	page 5
Committee Recommendations	page 6
Committee Duties	page 6
Health and Safety Committee Talking Points	page 8
Recommended Actions	page 9
Prevent Pests and Reduce Pesticide Use and Exposure through Integrated Pest Management (IPM).....	page 10
Prevent Mold and Moisture Issues	page 11
Reduce Chemical and Environmental Hazards	page 12
Practice Effective Cleaning and Maintenance: Green Cleaning.....	page 13
Ensure Good Ventilation.....	page 14
Developing School Environmental Health Goals and Objectives.....	page 15
Tools for Effective and Efficient Health and Safety Committees.....	page 17
Additional Resources.....	page 19
References.....	page 22

Why create a Health and Safety Committee?

- ✓ Under state law, Health and Safety Committees are required for all New York State public schools. Ideally, nonpublic schools also create these committees.
- ✓ Fully developed and efficiently functioning Health and Safety Committees are integral to responding to and preventing environmental health concerns in schools.
- ✓ While other state-mandated committees address concerns related to actions and interactions of students, staff and parents, Health and Safety Committees focus on the actual physical environment of school buildings.
- ✓ Health and Safety Committees comprise stakeholders from a variety of organizations, occupations and positions in a school's greater community. This cross-agency team helps develop, direct, support and implement environmental health programs in schools. The law requires union participation.
- ✓ Effective Health and Safety Committees can help schools achieve better student attendance, fewer nurse's office visits, improved student and staff health, increased staff productivity and retention, stronger academic performances and cost savings.

Health and Safety Committees:

- Required for all public schools under NYS law
- Prevent and address environmental health concerns
- Cross-agency team, with union participation required
- Many benefits for students and staff

NEW YORK STATE LAW REQUIRING HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES IN SCHOOLS

Under the Rebuild Schools to Uphold Education (RESCUE) Law of 1998, Health and Safety Committees are required in all school districts.

Commissioner's Regulation 8 NYCRR 155 as mandated by the RESCUE Law.

Section 155.4 Uniform Code of Public School Building Inspections, Safety Rating and Monitoring

Boards of Education and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) shall establish a process to monitor the condition of occupied public school buildings in order to assure that they are safe and maintained in a state of good repair.

Schools must establish a Health and Safety Committee composed of representation from district officials, staff, bargaining units, and parents.

The Board of Education is required to adopt:

- Procedures for investigation and disposition of complaints related to health and safety. Such procedures shall involve the Health and Safety Committee and at a minimum shall conform to the following requirement:
 - o Provide for the written response to all written complaints. Such written responses shall describe:
 - The investigations, inspections, or tests made to verify the substance of the complaint, or a statement explaining why further investigations, inspections or tests are not necessary.
 - The results of any investigations, inspections or tests which address the complaint.
 - The actions, if any, taken to solve the problem.
 - The actions, if any, taken if the complaint involved a violation of law or a contract provision.

Please Note: The Health and Safety Committee is mandated to address health and safety concerns in occupied buildings and must have public authorization and support from the Board of Education and superintendent.

ESTABLISHING A HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE¹

Health and Safety Committees can be appointed by the principal, in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the Board of Education.

Who Should Be Involved?	How to Recruit Members	Committee Structure Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and school stakeholders who are currently involved, interested, or invested in school environmental health. • NYSUT recommends Health and Safety Committees include the following members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Administrators o School Physician/MD o Nurse o Custodian o Building and Grounds Administration o Union Representatives o BOCES Health & Safety Representative, Supervisor of Attendance o Technology Director o Teacher Representatives o Transportation Department Representative o Additional Staff Representatives as determined by school o PTA Representative(s) o Students (encouraged) o Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members should be publicly solicited by the administration. • Letters of notification should be sent to staff, unions and parents in a democratic fashion to assure public confidence and independence from administrative control. • An effort should be made to include people interested in school environmental health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Chairpersons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Allows for easier access to the chain of command, eases the workload, and allows freedom in scheduling meetings, inspections and/or investigations. • Building Level Committees and a Central District-Wide Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ideally, a Committee would be formed in each school of a district. o If the Committee is only district-wide, representative(s) from each group listed in Column 1 should be included. Each representative should share information with their counterparts from each school building in the district. • Appointment of qualified individuals to the following positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Coordinator o Pesticide Designee per the Neighbor Notification Law o Asbestos Designee under Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act • Development of Subcommittees to divide skills and manage tasks.

¹ <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/articles/GuidelinesfortheHealthandSafetyCommittee.html>

COMMITTEE DUTIES

Regulation Requirements

Under the [Commissioner's Regulation 8 NYCRR 155](#) (Sections 4 and 5) as mandated by the RESCUE Law, Committees are responsible for:

- 155.4(c)(1) providing consultation for the building safety rating.
- 155.4(d)(7) being involved in disposition of complaints related to health and safety.
- 155.5(i) addressing complaints regarding excessive noise.
- 155.5(n) participating in post construction inspection to confirm that the area is ready to be opened for use.

Additionally, committees are responsible for:

- Providing a well-publicized list of contacts, including locations and phone numbers, for persons to contact to register concerns.
- Scheduling public meetings to address health and safety concerns in occupied buildings.
- Providing a protocol for monitoring construction and maintenance projects.
- Providing a protocol for immediate notification of health and safety concerns in occupied buildings to the district's chain of command.
- Providing a protocol to track complaints in writing.
- Providing a protocol for investigations, inspections or tests that address complaints.
 - o Coordinating responses to emergent health issues potentially related to school environmental health.
 - o Involving nurses and parents on committee as true advocates for children and overall school environmental health and safety.
- Providing a protocol for closing complaints after action or due consideration and for communicating to complainants.
- Developing a file for maintaining records of complaints and copies of written responses.
- Establishing committee reporting procedures to provide input into the existing district administrative chain of command and maintenance work order system.
- Providing a protocol for making records available to the public upon request.
- Establishing regular meetings.
- Participating in trainings to appropriately and efficiently address school environmental health topics and concerns.

COMMITTEE DUTIES

Recommendations

- Meet and act proactively rather than reacting to problems.
- Maintain lists of people to notify before various maintenance or construction activities.
- Establish a minimum frequency of meetings per year, keeping in mind time constraints and competing priorities.
 - Minimum recommendation of quarterly meetings.
 - Monthly or bimonthly meetings are preferred.
- Conduct periodic school walkthroughs to inspect school buildings for signs of potential problems.
- Breaking up roles of participants and developing subcommittees.
 - Use individual skills and abilities for success.
- Advocate for energy efficient school environment improvements.
- Advocate for funding to prevent and address concerns.
- Maintain or audit schedules of committee meetings and initiate content for required notifications.
 - Designate a recorder for each meeting to document meeting minutes and provide for meeting minutes approval by the committee.
- Monitor the requirement of Commissioner's Regulation 8 NYCRR 155.5(a) during construction or maintenance activities.
- Conduct investigation and disposition of complaints required under Commissioner's Regulation 8 NYCRR 155.5.
- Provide written responses to submitted school environmental health complaints.
- Audit health and safety issues and coordinate with security issues.
- Audit action taken on complaints that require maintenance.
- Adopt available "Toolkits" to meet the individual needs of schools.
- Develop a mechanism for staff, such as nurses, to report health concerns potentially related to the school environment.
- Make public notices of upcoming meetings and meeting notes.
 - The Parent Teacher Association (PTA), in particular, should be made aware of meetings as a means to involve parents.
 - Disseminate information in a timely manner to keep parents and community members updated on school environmental health activities and overall progress.
- Provide consistent communication to school board, administration, parents, staff and their unions, and the community at large.
- Develop and maintain community partnerships. Benefits include:
 - Opportunity to develop new and improved methods of effective communication.
- Increased networking opportunities to meet and exceed goals.
- Better understanding of school/district community and their wants and needs.
 - Increased support of programs.
 - Maximizing organizational resources.
 - Maintaining sustainability of school environmental health initiatives.
 - Opportunity to benefit from new ideas.
- Additional outlets for discussing new ideas as well as combating challenges.
- Develop and implement guidelines for environmental health-promoting actions at school opening.
 - Generally, studies have shown an increase in asthma rates at the beginning of the school year.
 - Use green cleaning methods with approved green cleaning products and equipment to lessen adverse health impacts from environmental exposures.

Health and Safety Committee duties should be as broad as possible.

Committee Member Roles

Staff and their unions

- Convey to the Health and Safety Committee concerns regarding the health of staff and students as well as building conditions, i.e. classrooms, office.
- Address issues related to specific classroom hazards. This might include the use of chemicals in a science class or the proper handling of toxic art supplies.
- Explore ways to integrate school environmental health issues into course curricula.

School nurses

- Record, monitor and report to the Health and Safety Committee asthma and allergy-related issues in children.
- Provide input and suggestions regarding health and safety issues and possible solutions.
- Report to the committee health issues in children relevant to school building conditions or other school environmental health factors.

Be sure to include:

BOCES, Food Service Staff, School Secretary, Counseling Staff, Therapists, Students

Facility managers and custodians

- Inform committee of health and safety issues that arise including those related to building conditions, excessive mold/moisture, inadequate ventilation, pest control/problems, or construction/renovation projects and resource challenges.
- Propose or implement ideas to increase the use of green cleaning products, safer chemicals and better equipment.

Parents

- Participation in school Health and Safety Committees provides parents with the opportunity to act as an advocate for change on their children's behalf.
- Involvement helps educate them about important school environmental health issues.
- Fostering relationships with school parent-teacher associations (PTAs) is an excellent way to encourage the involvement of parents.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE TALKING POINTS

Here is a sample of potential agenda items for monthly meetings. Including all environmental health topics at least once per year helps to be proactive against potential issues. To learn more detail about each topic visit this website put together by the NYS Department of Health: [Clean, Green and Healthy Schools](#)

January	Dust, housekeeping and occupant roles	How may the accumulation of dust in certain areas affect respiratory health?
February	Asthma triggers	Cleaning products, dust, allergens
March	IAQ/ Ventilation	Does your classroom or workspace have a mechanical ventilation system?
April	Integrated Pest Management	How does your school safely and effectively manage pests? Do they follow the best practices of the NYS Integrated Pest Management system? Review and discuss the following: School Integrated Pest Management & Neighbor Notification
May	Water, excessive heat	What are temperatures like in workplaces? Do you have A/C? Time for rest, shade and water breaks?
June	Lab Safety Chemical Storage/Cleanout	Review and discuss the following: NYS SED Chemical Storage and Safety
July	Transportation Department - environmental considerations	Is there proper ventilation in the garage? How are buses cleaned? Are staff trained to clean safely?
August	Green Cleaning	Back to School preparations. How does your school comply with the NYS Green Cleaning Law? Learn more here: New York's Green Cleaning Program
September	Energy efficiency, Construction/renovation projects	What is done to protect the school community during construction? How is dust minimized? Has a representative from the construction company been invited to join the Health and Safety Committee? See more here: Part 155.2 Construction and remodeling of school district facilities
October	Mold and moisture	How does your school control moisture? Has there been any flooding incident that has caused mold? What was done to remediate? Learn more from the EPA: The EPA and Mold
November	Asbestos & re-inspections	Develop & strengthen partnerships. Has your school been completing the required triennial asbestos inspections? See here: AHERA . Are you being properly notified of upcoming abatements?
December	Slips, trips and falls	Have you requested to the view the Log of Injuries and Illnesses to assess the number of recorded slips, trips and falls that resulted in injury? Have conditions that caused slips, trips or falls been corrected

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

By Topic

For specific laws and regulations pertaining to schools, please see the Clean, Green, and Healthy Schools website: https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/healthy_schools/topics.htm

If you are interested in taking your school's Health & Safety Committee work to the next level, you should participate in the New York State Clean, Green, and Healthy Schools Program.

NEW YORK STATE CLEAN, GREEN, AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

A Statewide School Environmental Health Program developed through collaborative efforts by the New York State Department of Health in conjunction with over 40 state and federal agencies, and non-government organizations.

The New York State Clean, Green, and Healthy Schools Program has been developed to help schools improve the health and safety of their school environment, which may result in better attendance, productivity, and test scores.

The program is voluntary and provides information for all school occupants on best practices, tools, knowledge and resources in nine environmental health focus areas:

1. Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)
2. Energy and Resource Conservation
3. Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
4. Mold/Moisture
5. Chemical and Environmental Hazards
6. Cleaning and Maintenance
7. Transportation
8. Construction/Renovation
9. Water Quality



To learn more about the Clean, Green, and Healthy Schools Program, visit their website at https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/healthy_schools/index.htm

For any questions, contact them at CGHSchools@health.ny.gov

Prevent pests and reduce pesticide use and exposure through Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

NYS Requirements

Implement an Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM)

Use alternatives to pesticides in maintenance of outdoor school grounds, playgrounds and fields

Simple Actions

Make a list of known or expected pests; monitor; define action thresholds

Seal off pests' entry routes

Remove trash from the building or bus daily; use lids on trash bins

Clean food crumbs or spills promptly, minimize eating outside of cafeteria and in buses

Remove standing water or water-damaged/wet materials and fix plumbing leaks

Reduce clutter and hiding places for pests

Keep outdoor vegetation at least 1 foot away from the building

Complex Actions

Convene an Integrated Pest Management committee

Expand Integrated Pest Management program into indoor and outdoor areas

Ensure the school has adequate cafeteria space for all meals

Incorporate pest proofing into building construction and renovation planning

Develop protocols for decision-making

Prevent mold and moisture issues

NYS Requirements

Each school district must have a Health and Safety Committee, which should monitor and address mold/moisture issues

Simple Actions

Clean and thoroughly dry any wet areas within 24-48 hours

Remove rubber mats from carpeted areas

Conduct routine moisture inspections; check for wet spots, roof and plumbing leaks, condensation and mold

Discard and replace water-damaged porous materials such as ceiling tiles and insulation

Complex Actions

Maintain indoor humidity levels between 30-60%

Clean carpets with extraction cleaners to remove water and prevent mold growth

Ensure water does not pool within 10 feet of the building foundation

Reduce the amount of installed carpets; use area rugs if needed

If there is excess moisture, identify and correct the source

Fix leaks in plumbing, roofs, and around windows

Reduce chemical and environmental hazards

NYS Requirements

Test all water outlets potentially used for drinking or cooking for the presence of lead and remove those above the action level of 5ppb

Conduct a chemical inventory; appropriately discard outdated or unsuitable materials; ensure material safety data sheets are up-to-date and available

Establish anti-idling policies for school buses and delivery trucks

Develop and implement asbestos management plans, in compliance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act

Simple Actions

Create school/district guidance for classroom materials selection; switch to low/non-toxic cleaning, classroom, and art supplies

Check radon levels in buildings, especially if the school is in a high-radon risk area

Remind staff of policies regarding not using personal cleaning or pesticide products in schools

Develop a list of rooms or areas that may contain lead-based paint

Review school's hazard communication plan

Enforce anti-idling policies for parents as well as school buses and delivery trucks.

Schedule and conduct periodic chemical cleanouts

Remove mercury thermometers and other sources of mercury

Complex Actions

Inspect and replace outdated fixtures for degradation/chemical leaks

Remediate for radon if levels exceed 4 pCi/L

Form a chemical management team who can set policy on how chemicals are secured, managed, purchased or disposed

Develop and implement bus replacement strategies that increase the proportion of newer, cleaner buses on the road; focus on preventive maintenance; retrofit older buses with emission control technologies

Any pesticides stored on site should be in a facility separate from other supplies

Practice effective cleaning and maintenance: Green Cleaning

NYS Requirements

Procure and use environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products

Simple Actions

Schedule routine cleaning using green products

Draft recommendations for cleaning and maintenance routines

Schedule regular school and grounds walkthroughs to assess health and safety risks

Install minimum 6' walk-off mats by all entryways to reduce dirt and water in the school

Use a damp cloth for daily dusting and damp mops on hard floors

Ensure cleaning products are out of students' reach

Minimize clutter, especially around ventilation units

Complex Actions

Draft protocols/procedures for use of products: how to use products, acceptable containers and incompatibilities, methods for transfer and dilution of materials, spill response and disposal, etc.

Provide trainings for teachers, maintenance staff, and others to ensure awareness of cleaning and maintenance practices, acceptable products, and other concerns

Draft procedures for requesting/performing non-routine cleaning

Ensure good ventilation

NYS Requirements

Each school district must have a Health and Safety Committee, which should monitor and address ventilation issues

Simple Actions

Implement a schedule for inspecting and cleaning filters

Adjust outdoor air ventilation rates to meet industry standards; air cleaner systems should not be used to reduce ventilation requirements

Clean air intakes of dirt and debris

Educate teachers and school staff on the importance of keeping HVAC systems on

Keep unit ventilators free of clutter

Install highest efficiency filters possible

Install carbon monoxide detectors near combustion sources

Establish minimum number of meetings for Health and Safety Committees with list of topics to discuss

Complex Actions

If necessary, re-route school traffic and buses to keep exhaust away from fresh air intakes

Apply new air ventilation, cleaning, and filtration technologies to improve HVAC system

Draft ventilation and odor complaint investigation and response procedures

Routinely inspect buses to ensure exhaust systems are working properly and there is no intrusion of vapors into the interior of the bus

Move pollutant sources away from air intakes

Developing school environmental health goals and objectives

Development of goals and objectives can benefit school environmental health initiatives in that they define what needs to occur to achieve positive and healthful outcomes, with a means of direction.

What is a goal?

A goal is a broad statement of direction used to explain the general intent of a program.

What is an objective?

Objectives break down a goal into smaller parts that provide specific, measurable actions by which the overarching goal can be accomplished.

Why develop goals and objectives?

Goals and objectives can provide a foundation to planning, implementing and evaluating effective health promotion programs.

Objectives should follow SMART Guidelines:



To ensure that an objective is useful and meets SMART guidelines, it should include:

1. The outcome to be achieved, or what will change
2. The conditions under which the outcome will be observed, or when the change will occur
3. The criterion for deciding whether the outcome has been achieved, or how much change
4. The priority population, or who will change



Example objective: By the end of 2023, 90 percent of school staff will be able to identify and implement at least three techniques that can lead to mold and moisture prevention.

Source: McKenzie, Neiger & Thackeray, 2013

Tools for effective and efficient health and safety committees

Provided below are links that can be used by Health and Safety Committees:

- 1) to measure and organize school environmental health status; and/or
- 2) that provide information for promoting school environmental health.

All documents can be modified to reflect school-specific needs and actions.

Checklists

[Administrative Staff Checklist](#)

Administrative staff play a critical role in promoting and maintaining good Indoor Air Quality (IAQ). This EPA-developed checklist can be utilized to engage administrative staff in the process of school inspections to ensure regular and thorough cleaning, adequate ventilation and the proper use of office equipment.

[Building and Grounds Maintenance Checklist](#)

The building and grounds maintenance checklist, as developed by the EPA, is a useful tool for building and grounds maintenance staff to examine supplies, control dust, clean floors, drain traps, monitor moisture, address leaks and spills, control pests, and ensure a clean and safe school environment.

[Checklist for Mold Remediation](#)

This EPA-developed checklist can guide Health and Safety Committees in assessing and remediating mold in school environments. It is designed to highlight key parts of a school remediation and leaves opportunity for additional steps developed by the Health and Safety Committee to address any identified problems with school environmental health.

[Food Service Checklist](#)

Food services staff and school administrators can promote good IAQ in schools by using this EPA-developed checklist when inspecting cooking areas, handling food and inspecting storage areas, conducting waste management, and developing delivery procedures.

[Health Officer/School Nurse Checklist](#)

This EPA-developed checklist is geared towards school health officers and/or school nurses who aim to maintain student health, educate students on IAQ, health and hygiene and keep a clean, properly ventilated office or clinic.

[Indoor Air Quality \(IAQ Management Checklist\)](#)

When developing an IAQ profile for your school, it is important to have all aspects of IAQ documented. This EPA-developed tool can help in this documentation.

[Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\) Checklist](#)

This EPA-developed checklist can assist school administrators, Health and Safety Committees and others involved in promoting school environmental health and safety in developing an official IPM policy, designating pest management roles, inspecting, identifying, and monitoring pests, developing preventative strategies and evaluating results.

Renovation and Repairs

This EPA-developed checklist can be used by school administrators, maintenance and facilities staff and Health and Safety Committees to ensure adequate actions are taken during painting, flooring, roofing and other projects.

School Official's Checklist

School officials provide an important leadership role in creating healthy indoor school environments. This EPA-developed checklist can guide school officials in making sure that they are taking a liaison position, providing verbal and written support, helping to create or sustain an IAQ management plan and being involved in developing an emergency response plan.

Teacher Classroom Checklist

This EPA-developed checklist was created to engage school teachers in the process of school inspections, sustaining an Indoor Air Quality management program, and promoting good IAQ in their classrooms. The checklist can help in maintaining general classroom cleanliness, managing animals in the classroom, reducing moisture sources, and additional preventive actions to ensure a healthy learning environment.

Ventilation Checklist

As adequate air ventilation is critical in ensuring good IAQ, facilities and maintenance staff can use this EPA-developed checklist to help examine outdoor air intakes, system cleanliness, outdoor air supplies, air distribution, exhaust systems and quantity of outdoor air.

Walk through Inspection Checklist

This EPA-developed checklist is geared toward Health and Safety Committee members, administrators, inspectors and others involved in creating a healthy indoor school environment. They can use this tool to conduct thorough top to bottom assessments of the entire school facility.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Building Air Quality Guide: A Guide for Building Owners and Facility Managers

This user-friendly guide developed by the EPA aims to improve air quality by providing practical suggestions on preventing, identifying and resolving indoor air quality (IAQ) problems in public and commercial buildings.

For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/building-air-quality-guide-guide-build-owners-and-facility-managers>

2. Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)

Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) provide shared educational programs and services to schools within New York State's school districts. Contact your local BOCES to access a range of services that can help your school create and maintain an educational environment that is a model for workplace safety and best practices.

For more information: <http://www.boces.org/AboutBOCES/WhatisaBOCES.aspx>

3. The Consumer Product Safety Commission guide "A Guide to Indoor Air Quality"

This guide, developed by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and prepared by the EPA, may be used to decide whether to take actions that can reduce the level of indoor air pollution in homes and other buildings.

For more information: <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Home/The-Inside-Story-A-Guide-to-Indoor-Air-Quality/>

4. ENERGY STAR Score for K-12 Districts

The EPA's ENERGY STAR program serves as a voluntary energy conservation movement to save energy and protect the climate through energy efficiency, in which schools can participate. ENERGY STAR Score for K-12 Schools applies to buildings or campuses used as a school for kindergarten through 12th grade students. The score aims to provide a fair assessment of the energy performance of a property relative to its peers, considering the climate, weather and business activities at the property.

For more information: <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/tools-and-resources/energy-star-score-k-12-schools>

5. Environmental Public Health Tracking Program

This program is used to collect and examine environmental and health information on an ongoing basis, as tracking helps to understand how hazards in the environment, exposures to such hazards, and disease change over time or across regions.

For more information: https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/public_health_tracking/

6. EPA Air Quality School Flag Program

The EPA Flag Program uses brightly colored flags to help children, parents, school personnel and the community become aware of daily air quality conditions. The colors of the flags correspond to the colors used in the EPA's Air Quality Index (AQI) which tells how clean or polluted the air is for that day. When members of the school and surrounding community know what the daily air quality is, they can adjust activities to reduce air pollution exposure. The flags are available for purchase by the school.

For more information: <http://www.usflags.com/products/5032-epa-air-quality-school-flag-program.aspx>

7. Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS)

The U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools program recognizes schools taking a comprehensive approach to greening their school, incorporating environmental learning with improving environmental and health impacts. The NYS Education Department can nominate up to four schools and one district to ED-GRS and the selected school honoree is based on documentation of the school's exemplary achievement in all three ED-GRS Pillars.

For more information: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/GreenRibbonSchools.html>

8. Health, Safety, Risk Management Services

Under the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), the Health-Safety-Risk Management Service provides training, consultation services, technical assistance and leadership to help schools create and maintain an educational environment that is a model for workplace safety and best practices. Staff of this program are specially trained to help superintendents, building principals, school nurses, classroom teachers and facilities staff develop proactive approaches to health and safety.

For more information: <http://www.capregboces.org/ProgramsServices/servicesguide/ManagementServices/risk.base.cfm>

9. Idle Free Schools Toolkit

This Toolkit provided by the EPA includes information that can be used to run an effective idling reduction campaign at a school in order to reduce student exposure to toxic vehicle exhaust.

For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/region8/idle-free-schools>

10. Improve Academic Performance through Better Indoor Air Quality in Schools

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) in schools impacts student academic performance. This resource can be used to learn more about the impacts of IAQ in schools on academic performance and how your school can improve the building's indoor environment.

For more information: https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/iaq-schools/improve-academic-performance-through-better-indoor-air-quality-schools_.html

11. Indoor Air Quality Manual

This manual developed by the Baldwin Union Free School District addresses a multitude of items that a Health and Safety Committee should be aware of and is credited with saving the district both time and money.

For more information: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/articles/IAQManual.pdf>

12. Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools (TfS) Action Kit

This EPA created toolkit can aid in the establishment of formal Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) programs by providing best practices for IAQ. TfS includes best practices for Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) maintenance and cleaning, routine moisture inspections, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plans, and more.

For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/indoor-air-quality-tools-schools-action-kit>

13. Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Under RESCUE regulations, all schools in New York State are required to have an IPM Plan in place. An efficient IPM plan can prevent pest problems in schools and effectively address pest problems should they arise, with a tiered level of management steps from baseline use of least poisonous pesticide availability to more extreme measures as deemed necessary. The EPA booklet Pest Control in the School Environment: Adopting Integrated Pest Management can assist schools in developing individualized IPM plans to fit the needs of buildings within the school.

For more information: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/ipm_in_schools_brochure.pdf
<https://nysipm.cornell.edu/>

14. New York's Green Cleaning Program

New York's Green Cleaning Program, under the New York State Office of General Services (OGS), is intended to serve institutions and the general public. It offers facility managers, school administrators, educators, parents and citizens free information and tools to promote and adopt green cleaning practices in indoor environments.

For more information: <https://greencleaning.ny.gov/Entry.asp>

15. NYS Clean, Green, and Healthy Schools

The NYS Clean, Green, and Healthy Schools Program mission is that every child and school employee has the right to a safe and healthy learning and working environment that is clean and in good repair. Through efforts proposed within the program, it is hoped that all New York State children, teachers and staff will attend/work in K-12 school environments that are healthy and safe through implementation of voluntary program guidelines.

For more information: http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/healthy_schools/index.htm

16. Project Learning Tree (PLT)

Project Learning Tree (PLT) is a multi-disciplinary environmental education program for educators and students. This hands-on learning program helps students expand their knowledge regarding environmental health and provides educators with tools needed to incorporate the environment into the classrooms.

For more information: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/1908.html>

17. Toolkit for Safe Chemical Management in K-12 Schools

This EPA web-based toolkit serves as an aid for schools in developing chemical management programs to improve chemical management practices. Examples include removing inappropriate, outdated, unknown and unnecessary chemicals from schools, raising awareness of chemical issues in schools and promoting sustainable solutions.

For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/schools-chemicals/toolkit-safe-chemical-management-k-12-schools>

18. Training, Testing, Telling (3Ts) Full Toolkit

This EPA developed campaign has the objective to provide school officials and child care facility operators with tools necessary for understanding and addressing lead in drinking water in their facilities. New York State guidelines are similar, but do differ slightly.

For more information on the EPA's 3Ts: <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/training-testing-telling-3ts-full-toolkit>

For more information on the NYS lead testing of school drinking water program: http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead_testing_of_school_drinking_water.htm

REFERENCES

Thurnau, C.T. (2015). NYSED office of facilities planning newsletter. Environmental Law Institute. (2016). Carbon monoxide alarms in existing schools overview of state laws. Retrieved from http://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/docs/co_draft_june_2016.pdf

New York State Education Department Office of Facilities Planning. Guidelines for the Health and Safety Committees. Retrieved from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/articles/GuidelinesfortheHealthandSafetyCommittee.html>

McKenzie, J.F., Neiger, B.L., Thackeray, R. (2013). Planning, implementing, & evaluating health promotion programs: A primer (6th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.

New York State Education Department Office of Facilities Planning Newsletter. (June, 2015). Retrieved from http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/documents/121_June2015.pdf

United States Environmental Protection Agency. Checklist for mold remediation. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-08/documents/checklist.pdf>

United States Environmental Protection Agency. Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Action Kit. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/indoor-air-quality-tools-schools-action-kit>