

# **New York State School Environmental Health Program Guide**

for clean, green, and healthy schools

*Registration to Completion*



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# Introduction

*New York State School Environmental Health Program Guide for clean, green, and healthy schools* provides thorough instructions for completing each level of the program. Participating in the New York State School Environmental Health Program will help your school to provide a cleaner, greener, and healthier environment for students and staff. A visual overview of the program levels that your school will complete as part of the program can be found in Appendix A.

This program includes 9 Focus Areas that are important for good environmental health within the school and its included buildings and grounds. The 9 Focus Areas are:

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

School environmental health is the way the physical environment of school buildings and school grounds influence the overall health of occupants. Acute or long-term exposure to environmental hazards can cause poor health and may result in exacerbation of asthma, respiratory congestion, fatigue, headaches, and other negative health outcomes. Addressing and preventing problems in the 9 Focus Areas helps improve your school's environmental health and may result in better student attendance and more time in class, improved student and staff health, increased staff productivity and retention, stronger academic performances and test scores, and cost savings. After successful completion of this program, your school will create a healthier school environment for students and staff.

For additional information, please visit our website at

[http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/healthy\\_schools/index.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/healthy_schools/index.htm) or contact us at

[CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov).

# Registration

The process to becoming a clean, green, and healthy school starts with registration. There are **2 basic steps**:

## 1. Complete the Registration

The registration asks for some basic information about your school, such as name, location, and other demographics.

## 2. Submit

Save the registration as a PDF file and send to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov).

That's it! Your school is now on its way to becoming a cleaner, greener, and healthier place to learn and work.

# Level 1: Seed Level School

Becoming a Seed Level School includes 4 steps:

## 1. Create a Green Team

The purpose of a Green Team is to identify environmental issues in your school and tackle them by setting goals, creating an action plan, and developing plans for sustainability. A Green Team includes individuals who are interested in and passionate about improving school environmental health and safety. Members can be from your school's Health and Safety Committee, environmental or recycling club, and/or other relevant committees and clubs. Individuals may be anyone, including maintenance staff, students, teachers, the school nurse, volunteers, community members, parents, and administrators. The number of people on the Green Team is determined by each school and can be large or small. Members can be recruited through the school website, school announcements, newsletters sent to parents, and a variety of other outlets that work best for you and your school. Once you have created a Green Team, it may be helpful to designate one member as the Coordinator to be your Green Team's leader. A Coordinator may perform tasks such as dividing up responsibilities, documenting meeting minutes and being the main contact for the team. It is recommended that your Green Team meet regularly (ideally this would be monthly) to identify and address any environmental health problems that may exist in your school. Regular meetings are important for tracking progress. Green Teams share responsibilities like those of larger Health and Safety Committees.

Members can be recruited through the school website, school announcements, newsletters sent to parents, and a variety of other outlets that work best for you and your school. Once you have created a Green Team, it may be helpful to designate one member as the Coordinator to be your Green Team's leader. A Coordinator may perform tasks such as dividing up responsibilities, documenting meeting minutes and being the main contact for the team. It is recommended that your Green Team meet regularly (ideally this would be monthly) to identify and address any environmental health problems that may exist in your school. Regular meetings are important for tracking progress. Green Teams share responsibilities like those of larger Health and Safety Committees.

### Key Steps

1. CREATE A GREEN TEAM
2. SUBMIT GREEN TEAM ROSTER
3. COMPLETE THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT FORM
4. DEVELOP GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## 2. Submit Information about Your Green Team

To complete this first step, please submit information about your newly created Green Team, including job titles, member roles, and Team activities. The completed form should be saved as a PDF file and sent to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov), as part of the Seed level package.

## 3. Complete the School Environmental Health Assessment

As you begin your journey to becoming a clean, green, and healthy school, it is important to understand the current status of your school's environmental health. The [School Environmental Health Assessment Form] should be completed by your Green Team. This self-assessment is to help understand in which of the 9 Focus Areas your school is doing well, and which areas could benefit from health-promoting actions. The assessment requires you to check off responses to questions and provides space after each question to record notes. You should assess each item on the list. As your school moves through the program, the notes you make on this assessment may help you to address problems or areas not previously considered. It will also help you to complete future steps of the program, such as developing goals and objectives or writing about your successes. Accurate responses allow for a better assessment of your school's overall environmental health and will help your Green Team

determine the best methods to improve areas of concern. Please save a copy of your assessment as a PDF file and send to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov).

#### 4. Develop Goals and Objectives

To complete this final step of the Seed Level, the Green Team will create goals and objectives based on results of the School Environmental Health Assessment Form. You should aim to have at least one objective for each of the 9 Focus Areas.

A Goals & Objective Template (insert link) has been created to use as a guide. When complete, please save as a PDF file and send to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov).

**A GOAL** is a broad statement of direction used to explain the overall intent of a program.

**An OBJECTIVE** is a statement that breaks down goals into small parts that include specific and measurable actions that allow the overall goal to be accomplished.

Goals and objectives should follow **SMART Guidelines**. To align with **SMART Guidelines**, goals and objectives must be:

1. **S**pecific
2. **M**easurable
3. **A**ttainable
4. **R**ealistic
5. **T**imed

The more specific goals and objectives are, the easier it will be for your Green Team to measure success in the Focus Areas. When creating goals and objectives, it is also important to keep in mind "The 5 W's":

1. **Who** is going to be involved?
2. **What** do you want to accomplish?
3. **When** do you want to accomplish it?
4. **Where?** Identify a specific location.
5. **Why?** Provide specific reasons and the purpose of accomplishing a goal/objective.



Example objective: *By the end of 2017, 90% of school staff will be able to identify and implement at least three techniques that can lead to mold and moisture prevention.*

# Level 2: Sprout Level School

Becoming a Sprout Level School includes 2 steps:

## 1. Demonstrate Success in the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Focus Area

To complete the first step in the Sprout Level, you must demonstrate success in the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Focus Area. IAQ is a broad focus area that incorporates many important aspects of environmental health that are essential for keeping your school safe and healthy for occupants. Completing the IAQ Focus Area will provide your Green Team with a strong foundation to complete the other 8 Focus Areas.

Please submit the required items in the IAQ Focus Area to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov). The required items for the IAQ Focus Area can be found in Appendix B.

## 2. Tell Your Story about Achieving Success in the IAQ Focus Area

The final step of the Sprout Level is to write a brief story (one page maximum) detailing your experience completing the IAQ Focus Area. Consider including information such as how your Green Team began the process, what new information you found, what you accomplished, lessons learned, any challenges you may have faced and how you overcame them.

Key Steps
1. SUCCESS IN THE INDOOR AIR QUALITY (IAQ) FOCUS AREA
2. TELL YOUR STORY

Please save this document as a PDF file and send it to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov). You may also want to use this story for your school website or newsletter to promote your accomplishments!

# Level 3: Blossom Level School



Becoming a Blossom Level School includes 2 steps:

## 1. Demonstrate Success in 5 Focus Areas

To complete the first step in the Blossom Level, you must demonstrate success in a total of **5** Focus Areas. This means that your Green Team must choose **4** additional Focus Areas beyond the IAQ Focus Area that you completed in the Sprout Level. Please refer to Appendix B of this document to find information on other Focus Areas and their requirements. You may choose to complete any 4 of the remaining Focus Areas; they do not have to be completed in any order.

Please submit the required items for **4** additional Focus Areas to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov). The required items for your chosen Focus Areas can be found in Appendix B.

## 2. Take Pictures, Videos, and/or Create Graphics of the Results of the Completed Focus Areas

To complete the final step of the Blossom Level, please share pictures, video(s), and/or graphics to show how your school became successful in 5 Focus Areas. Capture moments that demonstrate growth and improvement in your school's environmental health. Anyone in the school community can help capture these moments, and this can be a fun opportunity to get students, teachers, and other staff members involved! Please provide a brief explanation of each graphic and what it means to your school community.

### Key Steps

1. SUCCESS IN 5 FOCUS AREAS
2. TAKE PICTURES, VIDEOS, AND/OR CREATE GRAPHICS

Submit the photos/videos/graphics to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov). You may also want to use these items for your school website or newsletter to promote your accomplishments!

# Level 4: Apple Level School

Becoming an Apple Level School includes 4 steps:

## 1. Demonstrate Success in All 9 Focus Areas

To complete the first step in the Apple level, please demonstrate success in the remaining 4 Focus Areas that were not completed in the Sprout and Blossom levels. Please refer to Appendix B of this document to find information on the remaining Focus Areas and their requirements.

Please submit the necessary items for the remaining 4 Focus Areas to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov). The required items for these Focus Areas can be found in Appendix B.

## 2. Tell Your Story

The second step in completing the Apple Level is to “Tell Your Story”. This is your opportunity to share your school’s experience participating in the NYS School Environmental Health Program. Please provide us with a one page story about how your school began this program, what you have learned about school environmental health, the successes and struggles that you encountered while completing all 9 Focus Areas, the impact the program has had on your school, and a reflection of your overall experience.

### Key Steps

1. SUCCESS IN ALL 9 FOCUS AREAS
2. TELL YOUR STORY
3. HOST A POSTER DAY
4. CREATE A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Please save your story as a PDF file and send to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov). This story may help other schools become a clean, green, and healthy school, too!

## 3. Host a Poster Day at Your School

The third step of the Apple Level is to host a Poster Day at your school. The goal of the Poster Day is to involve the entire school in learning more about the 9 Focus Areas included in this program. This is an opportunity for your school to have fun and be creative. Your school’s Poster Day can include a showcase of presentations created by students, a competition between grade levels, or an appearance by a local environmental professional or organization to speak to your school about the importance of a healthy school environment. We recommend that the Poster Day be organized by the Green Team, but take the opportunity to involve others in the process. Regardless of the form your school’s Poster Day may take, we hope that it is a fun, educational experience for the entire school community.

It is recommended that you provide Poster Day participants with an Evaluation Form to document feedback about the success of the event. Feedback about Poster Day activities may help you plan future events.

To successfully complete this step, provide us with a complete description of your Poster Day activities along with pictures from the event. Please send all documents to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov).

#### **4. Create a Plan to Sustain Success at Your School**

The final step to becoming a clean, green, and healthy school is to create a plan to sustain your success in the 9 Focus Areas. A Sustainability Plan should be developed that will help you to remain current with policies and practices that you documented or developed while participating in this program. You should also be able to measure the impact of the objectives you created and achieve the goals you outlined in the Seed level.

Important questions to consider when creating your sustainability plan include:

- What is your vision?
- What do you want to sustain?
- What strategies and methods will you use to sustain positive changes?
- Who will help maintain a healthy school environment?
- What action steps are needed for sustainability?
- What is the timeline for the action steps?
- What barriers might exist?

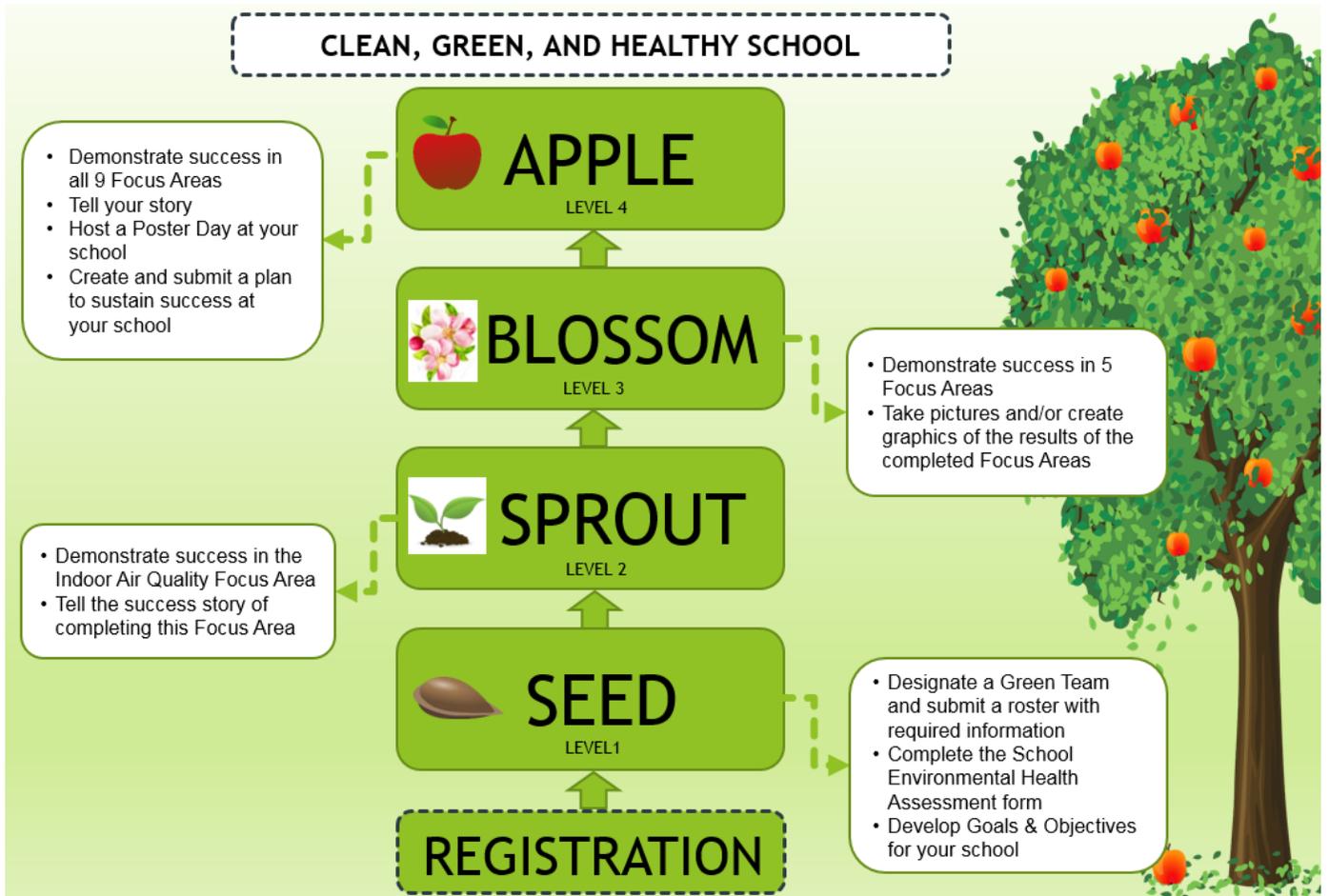
Your school's plan for sustainability can take any form, as long as it meets your school's unique needs and promotes actions to keep your school environment safe and healthy.

Please save your Sustainability Plan as a PDF file and send to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov).

# **A Clean, Green, and Healthy School**

Congratulations! You have completed all four levels of the NYS School Environmental Health Program. Now that you are a clean, green, and healthy school, we hope that your school will continue to use the resources provided by this program to maintain a healthy and safe environment to protect and promote the health and performance of all school occupants. We also hope that you will use your skills and experiences to help other schools that may be struggling to achieve improved school environmental health by being a mentor to them.

# Appendix A- Program Framework



# Appendix B

## Requirements to Complete Each Focus Area

This section provides information necessary for demonstrating success in all 9 Focus Areas, as referenced in the Sprout, Blossom and Apple Levels. Under each Focus Area, you will find a description about the topic to help you better understand what it is and how it impacts health. You will also find a complete list of items in each Focus Area that are required for submission to effectively demonstrate success in that Focus Area.

**Please Note:** When demonstrating success in a Focus Area, all documents should be saved in PDF format and sent to [CGHSchools@health.ny.gov](mailto:CGHSchools@health.ny.gov).

For more information about each of the 9 Focus Areas, please visit our website at [http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/healthy\\_schools/index.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/healthy_schools/index.htm).

## Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) is affected by several factors, including those associated with building operations and maintenance. Poor IAQ may result from inadequate ventilation, intrusion of outdoor pollutants into the building, mold from inadequate moisture control, allergens in dust and from rodents and cockroaches, inadequate control of chemical contamination, and improper cleaning practices. These contaminants can lead to health symptoms, including respiratory conditions such as asthma and allergies, and other negative outcomes such as higher rates of absenteeism and poor academic performance.

Performing a walk-through of your school building(s) is important for identifying, addressing, and monitoring any problems that may exist. Consider making a building walk-through an annual activity to regularly evaluate building systems that affect your school's IAQ.

You can improve the IAQ in your school and **demonstrate success in the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Focus Area** by completing and submitting the following items:

**1. A certificate of completion<sup>1</sup> of the following training:**

- [IAQ and Health: Managing Asthma for Improved Health and Academic Outcomes.](#) This one-hour training will help you identify, recognize and address indoor environmental asthma triggers and carry out actions important for effective asthma management in schools.

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*Free online trainings are a good way to educate the school community about environmental health.*

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**2. A copy of a certificate of completion<sup>1</sup> of at least one of the following trainings:**

- [Fresh Air: Optimal HVAC Management for Improved Health.](#) This one-hour training will help you understand the importance of optimal design, operation and maintenance of HVAC equipment for providing clean and healthy air in schools.
- [Indoor Air Quality Plus Energy Efficiency: A Formula for Saving Money While Protecting Your School's Indoor Environment.](#)<sup>2</sup> This one-hour training will help you understand the important connection between IAQ and energy efficiency, learn proactive approaches to saving energy and money, replicate best practices to integrate IAQ and energy efficiency into building operations, and use resources to help with IAQ efforts.
- [Energy Efficiency Plus Indoor Air Quality: Strategies for Improving Health and Reducing Energy Costs in Your School.](#)<sup>2</sup> This one-hour training will help you understand the critical connection between IAQ and energy efficiency and the importance of properly integrating the two for optimal occupant health and building performance. Provides information on best practices, procedures, policies, and resources that can help with your district's energy efficiency efforts, including the **Energy Savings Plus Health** guide and the accompanying **Interactive Air Quality Planner** that generates a custom IAQ checklist for use during your building upgrades.
- [Living in a Material World: Selecting the Right Materials to Improve IAQ in Schools.](#)<sup>2</sup> This one-hour training will help you understand how the selection of low-toxicity and low-emitting materials can improve IAQ and health outcomes among school occupants, how to develop product purchasing and use policies, and what types of materials need to be reviewed and considered.
- [Pollution Solution: How to Create IAQ Policies, Plans and Practices to Control Pollutant Sources in Your School District.](#) This one-hour training will help you learn to prevent IAQ issues before they start by controlling pollution sources, manage relationships between pollution and air factors to protect health, and implement policies, plans and practices to improve IAQ and school occupant health.

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend multiple people, particularly those on the Green Team, take the training(s).

<sup>2</sup> This course may also be counted toward completion of other Focus Areas.

**3. A copy of the completed [IAQ checklist] done during a school building walk-through**

Perform a walk-through in your school and complete the IAQ checklist as you do so.<sup>3</sup>

**4. Develop an action plan to address the findings from the walk-through completed in Step 3 above**

The action plan should address any identified problems. The action plan can take any form as long as it meets your school's specific needs and provides specific action steps.

**5. A preventive maintenance plan for HVAC systems in your school building(s)**

Items included in your preventive maintenance plan may include changing filters on a regular basis and inspecting HVAC systems regularly. This plan can take any form as long as it includes items important to maintaining HVAC systems in good repair. You may refer to the [Ventilation Checklist] for ideas.

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*Annual school walk-throughs  
are beneficial for proactively  
managing school  
environmental health.*

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<sup>3</sup> If mold is found, please refer to the [Mold Remediation Checklist] as a tool to help you address this issue.

# Energy and Resource Conservation

Conserving energy and resources is important to your school environment's efficiency and safety, and such efforts can take many forms. For example, your school can make facility and efficiency improvements by upgrading windows, replacing HVAC system filters, and exercising your school's energy- and water-efficient product purchasing and procurement plan. Action steps taken on an individual basis by school occupants can also improve the energy efficiency of your school. Such steps may include recycling or reusing scrap paper and turning off lights when a room is not in use. Improved energy and resource conservation efforts performed by your school may result in improved indoor air quality, increases in security and safety, a more comfortable school environment, improvements in teacher retention rates, increased attendance rates, performance improvements among students, and cost savings. More information can be found at: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/k-12\\_guide.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/k-12_guide.pdf).

You can promote and improve Energy and Resource Conservation in your school and **demonstrate success in the Energy and Resource Conservation Focus Area** by completing and submitting the following items:

**1. A copy of a certificate of completion<sup>1</sup> of at least one of the following trainings:**

- [Bringing Energy Efficiency and Indoor Air Quality to Your School through EPA's Energy Savings Plus Health Guidelines](#). This 1.5-hour training will help you understand how to protect IAQ while increasing energy efficiency.
- [Indoor Air Quality Plus Energy Efficiency: A Formula for Saving Money While Protecting Your School's Indoor Environment](#).<sup>2</sup> This one-hour training will help you understand the important connection between IAQ and energy efficiency, learn proactive approaches to saving energy and money, replicate best practices to integrate IAQ and energy efficiency into building operations, and use resources to help with IAQ efforts.
- [Energy Efficiency Plus Indoor Air Quality: Strategies for Improving Health and Reducing Energy Costs in Your School](#).<sup>2</sup> This one-hour training will help you understand the critical connection between IAQ and energy efficiency and the importance of properly integrating the two for optimal occupant health and building performance. Provides information on best practices, procedures, policies, and resources, including the **Energy Savings Plus Health** guide and the accompanying **Interactive Air Quality Planner** that generates a custom IAQ checklist for use during your building upgrades.

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*Energy and resource conservation efforts have many benefits, including cost savings.*

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**2. Your school's energy and resource conservation plan(s)**

If your school does not already have one, create an energy conservation plan. Every school occupant can make a positive impact on energy resources in your school environment. This plan can be as simple as posting flyers throughout the school to promote energy conservation activities such as turning off lights when a room is not in use or programming HVAC units to energy-efficient settings. This task allows you to be creative! After you have created a plan, please share it with us. Your plan may serve as a model for other schools seeking to conserve resources, improve efficiency, and possibly reduce costs.

**3. A copy of promotional materials**

Please submit a copy of promotional materials that were developed or used to promote energy conservation in your school. These promotional materials may take the form of brochures, flyers, signs, social media, or newsletter posts that are used to advertise and encourage energy conservation.

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend multiple people, particularly those on the Green Team, take the training(s).

<sup>2</sup> This course may also be counted toward completion of other Focus Areas

- 4. A description of observations from the walk-through (completed during Step 1 of the Indoor Air Quality Focus Area) specific to actions that are being taken to promote energy efficiency, emission reduction, and resource conservation**

This description should be no longer than 400 words.

- 5. Provide a copy of your school's Green Purchasing and Procurement Policy**

If your school does not have a policy, one should be developed.

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*Every school occupant can  
make a positive impact on  
energy resources in your  
school environment.*

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# Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a systematic way of addressing pests that can be applied to indoor and outdoor school environments. Pests in schools, such as cockroaches and mice, leave droppings and dander in the building which may cause or aggravate asthma and allergies. It is important to prevent pests from entering the building and remove sources of food, water, and shelter, as they are considered the best ways of dealing with pests. IPM does not forbid the use of pesticides in schools, but it promotes using pesticides to control pests in school buildings and grounds only when other methods have been unsuccessful.

It is important to control and limit exposure to pesticides because exposures may have harmful long-term effects on health. Health problems that may result from exposure to pesticides include, but are not limited to, hyperactivity, various cancers, hormone disruption, alterations in brain functioning, and more. It is important that your school implement an IPM program to reduce health risks from exposure to pests and pesticides among students and staff. IPM methods may include actions such as cleaning up immediately after eating or closing all windows at the end of the school day. If your school has a contractual agreement with an outside organization for pest management services, please ensure that the person who develops the contract incorporates IPM concepts into the proposal. Select a contractor who understands and abides by IPM methods and monitor their work to ensure compliance.

You can promote and improve Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in your school and **demonstrate success in the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Focus Area by completing and submitting the following items:**

- 1. A certificate of completion<sup>1</sup> of the training [Smart, Sensible and Sustainable Pest Management in Your School](#).** This one-hour training will help you improve asthma and health outcomes and increase attendance by implementing smart, sensible, and sustainable approaches for pest management in your school.
- 2. A copy of the completed [\[Integrated Pest Management Checklist\]](#)**  
Your Green Team should conduct a walk-through of the school building(s) and grounds to complete the Integrated Pest Management Checklist.
- 3. A description of what steps your school has taken to prevent pests and reduce pesticide use in your school**  
After completing the training in step 1 and the checklist in step 2, acquired skills and information can be used by your Green Team to actively improve IPM programs and actions in your school. Please provide us with a description (no more than 400 words) about what steps your school has taken to prevent pests and reduce pesticide use.

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*Pests can cause health problems and damage to buildings and grounds.*

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend multiple people, particularly those on the Green Team, take the training(s).

## Mold/Moisture

Mold is one of the most commonly reported environmental health issues in New York State schools. Mold spores and fragments are always present in the air or dust in a building and moisture in building materials or furnishings allows mold to grow. If there is visible mold or moldy odors in the air, there is a greater chance that students and staff are exposed to the spores. Exposure to mold can lead to sinus congestion, fatigue, headaches, and sore throats. The noted health outcomes can negatively impact learning and working among students and staff in schools. Therefore, it is important to take quick action to control moisture and mold problems to improve the environmental health in your school.

You can prevent and control Mold/Moisture issues in your school and **demonstrate success in the Mold/Moisture Focus Area** by completing and submitting the following items:

- 1. A certificate of completion<sup>1</sup> of the training [Mold and Moisture: Double Trouble for Schools](#).** This one-hour training will help you learn about mold remediation in schools and gain the skills to respond quickly and efficiently to moisture problems.
- 2. A copy of the completed [\[Checklist for Mold Remediation\]](#)**  
Understanding your school's current success or problems with mold and moisture is important to know what action needs to happen to address and prevent any issues. Your Green Team should complete the Checklist for Mold Remediation when they conduct a walk-through of the school building(s) and grounds. Including a visual inspection for mold and moisture damage during routine inspections is an excellent way to identify and remediate problems quickly.
- 3. A description of current methods used by your school to identify mold/moisture problems and what actions have been taken to control or prevent mold and moisture issues**  
This description should be no longer than 400 words.
- 4. A copy of your formalized process (or form) for reporting mold/moisture issues**  
If your school does not have a formalized process or form, one should be developed.
- 5. A copy of your school's water intrusion mitigation/preparedness plan**  
If your school does not have a plan, one should be developed.

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*The key to preventing mold growth is to identify and control moisture and water problems.*

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend multiple people, particularly those on the Green Team, take the training(s).

# Chemical and Environmental Hazards

It is important that chemicals are managed appropriately to ensure a safe and healthy school environment. Chemicals in the school environment can become a problem due to improper storing or labeling, misuse, and accidental or unnoticed spills. Exposure to hazardous chemicals, even for a short period of time, can result in serious illness or death. Chemical exposure is especially harmful for children. Chemicals that are commonly found in schools include diesel exhaust, cleaning supplies, pesticides, classroom/art supplies, and chemical reagents used in science laboratories. Other hazards that may be found in schools include mercury thermometers or polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in lighting ballasts.

You can reduce Chemical and Environmental Hazards in your school and **demonstrate success in the Chemical and Environmental Hazards Focus Area by completing and submitting the following items:**

1. **A certificate of completion<sup>1</sup> of Living in a Material World: Selecting the Right Materials to Improve IAQ in Schools Training.** In this one-hour training you will learn why the selection of low-toxicity and low-emitting materials can improve IAQ and health outcomes among school occupants, how to develop product purchasing and use policies, and what types of materials need to be reviewed and considered.
2. **Confirmation (e.g., attestation letter and/or de-identified summary report) that all staff are up to date with completing the following trainings:**
  - a. Global Harmonization Training associated with SDS
  - b. Right to Know
3. **A copy of the Chemical Inventory Worksheet**

It is important to manage chemicals in the school to prevent unwanted exposure and potential health problems. To ensure all chemicals used in the school are properly used, labeled, and stored, have your Green Team conduct a chemical inventory by completing and submitting a copy of the Chemical Inventory Worksheet.
4. **Statement of updated Safety Data Sheets**

Please have a member of the Green Team ensure that Safety Data Sheets are up-to-date and available to school staff. Then, have a Green Team member sign and submit a statement noting that this has been done.
5. **A description of what actions have been taken to improve chemical and environmental contaminant hazard management**

This description should be no longer than 400 words.
6. **A copy of your school's chemical management plan**

This document should include a protocol for addressing chemical spills, conducting chemical cleanouts, and other methods used by your school to manage chemicals and chemical hazards in an appropriate manner. This plan can take any form as long as it meets your school's specific needs.

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*Hazardous chemicals can be found in many different areas and materials throughout school buildings.*

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend multiple people, particularly those on the Green Team, take the training(s).

# Cleaning and Maintenance

Effective and efficient cleaning and maintenance procedures are important for promoting and preserving the health of students and staff in your school. Dirt and dust in school buildings and buses can aggravate allergies and asthma. Settled dust may contain common allergens such as pollen and pet dander, or toxic chemicals such as lead. The contaminants are often found in classrooms on windowsills, curtains, bookshelves, and other areas that are not regularly disturbed. Use of environmentally sensitive (green) cleaning products in elementary and secondary schools allows effective cleaning while minimizing negative impacts on the health of school occupants. If your school has a contractual agreement with an outside organization for cleaning purposes, the contract language should ensure that the contractor understands and abides by Green Cleaning policies and laws. Proper maintenance of building systems and spaces is also important because it may prolong their useful life, reduce unnecessary expenses, and improve indoor air quality.

You can promote and improve Cleaning and Maintenance procedures in your school and **demonstrate success in the Cleaning and Maintenance Focus Area** by completing and submitting the following items:

## 1. A certificate of completion<sup>1</sup> of Green Cleaning Trainings

New York's Green Cleaning Program offers multiple online training courses to increase learning about green cleaning. For the purposes of this program, please complete the following trainings:

1. Introduction to Green Cleaning and Green Cleaning Programs
2. Basics of Green Cleaning
3. Enhanced Green Cleaning Guidance to Reduce the Spread of Communicable Disease

The trainings can be found here:

[https://greencleaning.ny.gov/training/login.aspx?sm\\_au\\_=-iVV6MfNcb7rK7jns](https://greencleaning.ny.gov/training/login.aspx?sm_au_=-iVV6MfNcb7rK7jns).

Please register for an account to complete the trainings. Although only 3 trainings are required, completing additional trainings is encouraged. The Green Cleaning trainings are also recommended for Facilities Maintenance and other relevant staff.

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*Effective green cleaning practices lead to healthier indoor environments.*

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Other optional training that is available:

[Clean Bill of Health: How Effective Cleaning and Maintenance Can Improve Health Outcomes in Your School](#).

This one-hour training will help you understand the effects of proper cleaning and maintenance, determine appropriate standards of 'clean', how to choose safe cleaning products, and how to develop and implement a preventive maintenance plan.

## 2. A copy of the **[Green Cleaning Product Inventory]**

Your Green Team should conduct a green cleaning product inventory and complete this sheet to document what cleaning products are currently being used in your school, and to determine which items should be replaced by approved green cleaning products. For a comprehensive list of approved green cleaning products, please visit <https://greencleaning.ny.gov/Products.asp>.

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend multiple people, particularly those on the Green Team, take the training(s).

### **3. A copy of your school's Green Cleaning Plan**

Using efficient and effective green cleaning methods is important for the school environment and the health of its occupants. To ensure that green cleaning methods are being used in your school, the Green Team should develop a Green Cleaning Plan, which includes purchasing and use. If your school contracts with an outside organization to conduct school cleanings, it may be beneficial to include them in this plan.

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*Establish a policy for non-custodial staff regarding the use of personal cleaning products. Prohibit the use of products brought from home and provide teachers and staff with the school's general green cleaning products.*

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# Transportation

Maintaining a clean and safe school bus environment is important to prevent poor health outcomes among students since they travel to and from school on these buses daily. Not only is it important to make sure the inside of the school bus is clean and safe, it's also vital to enforce anti-idling policies at your school. Vehicle exhaust contains air pollutants that can cause adverse health effects, and children are especially vulnerable to these pollutants because their lungs are still developing. Increased exposures can heighten the risk of respiratory problems, including asthma and other health problems. Addressing these issues can help reduce exposure to pollutants that can contaminate indoor and outdoor air in schools. It is also important to ensure safe and proper use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials used in the bus garage. This may include oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, degreasers, and other chemicals.

You can improve the environment in school buses, increase environmentally-friendly practices in the transportation department in your district, and **demonstrate success in the Transportation Focus Area** by completing and submitting the following items:

**1. A cleaning procedure for buses**

Keeping buses clean is important to keep students healthy. Your Green Team should develop a cleaning plan that can be used on buses to ensure that they are healthy for riders. This can include scheduling regular cleanings and the use of specific green cleaning products.

**2. A plan to enforce “anti-idling” policies**

Enforcing anti-idling of buses and vehicles on school grounds is important for keeping the air clean and safe. Your Green Team should create a plan to enforce anti-idling policies at your school. This document can take any form as long as it meets your school's specific needs.

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*Diesel exhaust contains particulate matter which exacerbates asthma and other respiratory conditions.*

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**3. Three take-home messages from the presentation\* below:**

- **Training for School Bus Drivers.**

This New York State Education Department presentation provides school bus drivers with information about anti-idling practices and policies and the importance of anti-idling for health. Transportation staff are the intended audience for this presentation.

**4. A plan to improve fuel conservation, energy efficiency and emission reduction of fleet**

This could include consideration of alternatives to diesel fuel, more direct routes, training for drivers, and other topics.

**5. An example of a vehicle inspection report or daily inspection log from your transportation department/contractor**

**6. A copy of your school's preventive maintenance plan for your fleet**

If your school does not have a plan, one should be developed.

**7. A copy of your school's fuel storage procedures and emergency response protocols**

If your school does not have these documents, they should be developed.

**Note: If transportation services are contracted out, confirm that the contractor understands and follows NYS laws and regulations. For future contracts, include specific language in the contract that addresses the concerns discussed in this section.**

# Construction/Renovation

Including environmental considerations during construction activities is important for ensuring healthy indoor and outdoor school environments and preventing poor health outcomes among school occupants. Schools should take actions that preserve occupant health during renovation or other construction on school buildings or grounds. Construction should occur when school is not in session to prevent potential exposure to associated fumes or dust. If construction or renovation must occur when school is in session, it is important to notify parents, teachers and other school staff prior to the start of construction, curtain off construction zones, and only allow construction to occur outside of school hours. The Commissioner of Education must approve all major school construction or renovation and the district's construction plans must include specific instructions for health and safety protections. Major precautions should be in place prior to construction or renovation projects to protect all school occupants. For example, proper removal of old building materials should be emphasized to protect school occupants from any potential hazardous materials. Developing and following protocol for monitoring construction and maintenance projects can help your school sustain a safe and healthy environment during construction.

You can help prevent construction health hazards at your school and **demonstrate success in the Construction/Renovation Focus Area by completing and submitting the following items:**

- 1. A certificate of completion<sup>1</sup> of [Living in a Material World: Selecting the Right Materials to Improve IAQ in Schools Training](#)<sup>2</sup>.** In this one-hour training you will learn why the selection of low-toxicity and low-emitting materials can improve IAQ and health outcomes among school occupants, how to develop product purchasing and use policies, and what types of materials need to be reviewed and considered.
- 2. A copy of the school procedure for conducting construction or renovation on school grounds**  
This document should include health and safety precautions for construction and renovation to be considered by both the school and construction company. Examples include limiting work to times when school is not in session or when students are not present in the building, proper containment of construction sites, proper removal of old/hazardous building materials, use of mold-resistant materials, and limiting the idling of heavy machinery during construction on school premises, among other considerations.
- 3. A copy of your up-to-date Asbestos Certification**
- 4. A copy of your AHERA report**

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*Perform construction during breaks when students and staff are not present.*

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend multiple people, particularly those on the Green Team, take the training(s).

<sup>2</sup> This course may also be counted toward completion of other Focus Areas.

# Water Quality

It is critical that your school provides clean and safe potable water for all school occupants. Contaminants in water, such as lead, may be present in your school's water. Ingestion of toxins like lead can cause serious health problems, and impact their growth, behavior, and ability to learn. New York State Regulation ([10 NYCRR Subpart 67-4](#)) mandates that schools across the state test drinking water for lead contamination. If high lead levels are identified in your school's water, immediate action must be taken to solve the problem.

For more information on how to keep your school's water safe, refer to the [NYS Department of Health Drinking Water Protection Program's Lead Testing of School Drinking Water](#) website.

You can promote and improve the health and safety of water at your school and **demonstrate success in the Water Quality Focus Area by completing and submitting the following items:**

**1. A description of what your school has done to ensure that water provided by the school is safe and healthy**

This description should be no longer than 400 words.

**2. Three take-home messages from each of the presentations\* below:**

- [3T's for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools: Training for New York.](#)  
This US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) webinar provides a range of background information for lead, including health effects, sources of exposure, assessment of school drinking water, remediation, recordkeeping and communication of testing efforts.
- [Lead Testing in School Drinking Water.](#)  
This New York State Department of Health webinar discusses the requirements of 10 NYCRR Subpart 67-4, *Lead Testing in School Drinking Water.*

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*Make sure your school is following the necessary guidelines for testing water outlets*

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**3. A plumbing profile**

Please provide a plumbing profile for your school.

**4. Website where your lead in drinking water test results are posted**

Please provide the website where parents and other community members may access the results of testing conducted for lead in drinking water, as mandated by law.

Updated June 2022  
Updated November 2017  
Created, September 2016