



## Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

### Questions and Answers from the State-Based School IAQ Management Initiatives

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#### Funding

*#1 Q: Can you discuss areas where states may look for funding to promote and implement indoor air quality (IAQ) management?*

A: EPA Regions offer Cooperative Grant Agreements which provide some baseline funding for state-based school IAQ initiatives. In addition, state-based grants can assist you with basic implementation needs, such as staff time. Non-profit grant opportunities are also a great source of funding; for instance, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation may have some grants available. States may also look to grants and other funding opportunities for green and healthy school initiatives, as IAQ is an important element of healthy, high-performing schools.

#### Implementing State-Based School IAQ

*#2 Q: In your experience do school-based parent-teacher associations (PTAs) participate in IAQ management programs in school districts in your state?*

A: It is important to gain buy-in from a diverse collaborative of IAQ stakeholders. PTAs are an important component of an IAQ management program. At the state level, it may be useful to collaborate with a statewide PTA organization at school IAQ implementation planning meetings. This is an important group of individuals that has significant influence in communities and can assist with implementation and outreach at the district-level.

*#3 Q: Who generally initiates a state-based school IAQ management initiative? Do schools typically reach out to state agencies or do state agencies identify school districts?*

A: Kenny Foscue, Connecticut Department of Public Health: In Connecticut, it was our Department, in conjunction with the EPA region, that initiated IAQ management with school districts. We began a process of recruiting relevant agencies like the Department of Education and the public sector unit of the Connecticut OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) program, and statewide school stakeholder organizations. We feel IAQ is principally a health issue and therefore believe it is the responsibility of the state health departments to take a leadership role. However, school stakeholder

organizations like facilities directors associations, teachers unions and business officials associations can also be leverage points to utilize since they have the ability to do outreach to their membership.

Dan Tranter, Minnesota Department of Public Health: In Minnesota, the state Department of Public Health also initiated the program. Legislation was passed, and the need was determined to put together a school IAQ management program. The Department of Education came to us and others to develop requirements for IAQ management plans. Then we began offering trainings and on-site assistance. Along the way, we received funding to support the program, and added some other programmatic elements.

I certainly think schools could initiate a program. For example, a statewide organization (business officials, facility managers) could request that a state agency offer trainings, IAQ consultations, and/or other services. Of course, the state agency would have to be receptive, and with no funding and budget cuts in most states, it may not happen.

### Research

*#4 Q: Do partnerships with universities assist with state-wide surveys/studies/environmental research on state-based school IAQ initiatives?*

A: Partnering with universities/student researchers is a fantastic and cost-effective way to increase your capacity to conduct IAQ research and/or implement school IAQ management awareness and outreach. It is certainly worth a call to universities and colleges in your state to determine if they have courses of study (i.e., environmental science or engineering) that may allow for student partnerships.

### Resources

*#5 Q: Can Kenny Foscue of the Connecticut Department of Public Health provide more information on the "Tools for Offices" program (i.e. where can we access it?)*

A: The Connecticut Department of Public Health and their State-Based IEQ Initiative created a resource called *Tools for Office Buildings*, a modification for the *IAQ Tools for Schools* Program tailored specifically to the office environment. Currently, it is being implemented in offices across the state of Connecticut. For more information please visit:

[http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/environmental\\_health/eoha/pdf/TfOB\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/environmental_health/eoha/pdf/TfOB_Fact_Sheet.pdf)