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**16<sup>th</sup> Annual National Healthy Schools Day: April 3, 2018**

**United Effort for Children, Health, Environment, and Education**

(National, April 3, 2018) - **“It is time to put children first and end lead and other risks to all children in school and child care,”** said **Claire Barnett, Executive Director of Healthy Schools Network**, the national not-for-profit that co-founded and hosts Healthy Schools Day. She added, “For the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Day, we thank all the education and health leaders and staff in the states who have recognized the high cost of lead and other toxics to the future of children and are taking action to find and to [reduce risks in school](#) and child care settings.”

The [2018 Healthy Schools Day](#) theme is lead in school and child care infrastructure. This year, a record 59 NGOs nationwide are engaged in the event.

**About lead.** There is no safe level of lead for any child, according to US EPA, the federal Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. In fact, like many other health hazards common to educational facilities, lead has been ignored too long. Recently however, schools and child care facilities in dozens of states have become active on lead in drinking water. In fact, lead is ubiquitous: it is in paint, water, building and instructional materials, soil, and products.



*PA elementary school/ courtesy J Roseman*

Schools in poor communities are often in the worst condition, a strong indication they may also have the most lead in paint and water systems.

**President of HS Network’s Board of Director’s Chip Halverson, ND**, of Oregon said: “In my work as a teacher and now a physician, I am working with children and adults every day who are adversely affected by the polluting chemicals they can smell, taste, and touch. We need to protect our children when they are in our halls of learning. Regardless of what’s happening at home or the

community, schools have an affirmative responsibility to reduce artificial barriers to learning by reducing the use of toxic products indoors and out.”

**Fewer schools, less money, more children in need.** Across the US, there are 130,000 public and private K-12 schools enrolling some 55 million children and employing about 7 million adults. There are another 11 million children in tens of thousands of child care facilities. In all, over 20% of the total US population is in one of these facilities every day. Today, there are fewer public schools than a few years ago, but more children in them, more children with asthma and in poverty, more with special needs, and more on subsidized meal programs, yet fewer federal and state dollars for education and fewer staff.

Since lead paint must be carefully managed during school/child care renovations, and tests at the tap for lead and water systems improvements can also be costly, there is no question that many schools and child care facilities will need new resources to find and to eliminate lead.

**Health hazards and children.** The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reported that half of all schools have problems with indoor air pollution, a complex problem attributable to various sources, such as poor siting or engineering, leaky roofs, deferred maintenance and repairs, and the use of toxic products indoors and out. These hazards contribute to rising asthma cases, frequent asthma hospitalizations during the school year, absenteeism, and other health issues, such as problems concentrating and headaches, as well as cancer and other long-term diseases. Indoor pollutants, including lead and asbestos and PCBs, can add to children’s health and learning problems every single day.

See sample list of events at the foot of this release.

See all partners and activities at [www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org](http://www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org)



### SELECTED SUPPORTING STATEMENTS

**Patrick Breyse, PhD, CIH, Director, National Center for Environmental Health & Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:**

“Protecting children from harmful environmental exposures and health risks where they live, learn, and play is significant to a child’s growth and development. Because schools and early care and education facilities play an essential role in promoting the health and safety of children, National Healthy Schools Day is an important day to recognize the work that has been done amongst many partners and agencies to progress towards healthy and green indoor school environments for children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) are dedicated to ensuring that all children in the US have healthy homes, [schools, and communities](#) in which to grow.”

**David Rowson, Director, Indoor Environments Division, Office of Radiation and Indoor Air, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:** “Children and school staff spend more time in their school than anywhere else, other than home. We need to ensure that our nation’s school officials are working

to control exposures to indoor environmental pollutants and irritants that may affect the health and productivity of students and staff. Until every school has adopted an indoor air quality management program, we have a lot of work to do. Today I invite officials across the country to use [EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools](#) guidance and take the necessary steps to provide a healthy learning environment for their students.”

**John Musso, CAE, Executive Director, Association of School Business Officials-International, (DC):** “ASBO International believes all children deserve a safe and healthy learning environment. As the finance, facility, and operations leaders of school districts, school business officials can pave the way to healthier schools by educating staff about the dangers of lead products and developing lead-free procurement policies in their districts. We are proud to support National Healthy Schools Day and encourage our members to participate too!”



Portland, OR: water fountain closed due to lead, 2016, photo by parent

**David T. Dyjack, Dr.PH, CIH, Executive Director, National Environmental Health Association:** “The National Environmental Health Association recognizes that children spend some 16,000 hours of their youth inside schools and classrooms. Those spaces should be free from recognized hazards associated with indoor environments so that every American child can reach their full potential. With that aim in mind, NEHA is proud to support this year’s National Healthy Schools Day.”

**Kat Danaher, Senior Executive Assistant/Marketing, Green Seal, Inc. (DC):** “Our children deserve safe places to learn that minimize their exposure to toxins, irritants, and health dangers. Switching to proven-green cleaning products is one of the easiest ways to start, and can result in fewer sick days, fewer asthma attacks, better indoor air quality, and improved academic performance. National Healthy Schools Day is an excellent opportunity to reassert our commitment to making schools greener and healthier and to drive real changes and improvements that will protect people and the planet.”

**Derek G. Shendell, D.Env, MPH, Director/Principal Investigator, NJ Safe Schools Program, Rutgers School of Public Health:** “National Healthy Schools Day is annually an important opportunity to review and refocus efforts on comprehensive environmental health and occupational safety programs, policies and practices, including training/education in-person and online, in support of the nearly 1-in-5 Americans and New Jersey residents attending K-12 schools daily. Our team always highlights this observance in our spring statewide e-newsletter issues released prior to and the week of this day.”

**Carolyn Sarno-Goldthwaite, NEEP Director of Buildings & Community Solutions:** “Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) is proud to collaborate with the Healthy Schools Network and over 50 partners working to ensure that all students, faculty, and staff have access to healthy, safe, and efficient learning environments. Developing tools and resources to assist in the creation of these learning environments is essential to the well-being and resilience of both the building and its occupants. Resilient buildings equal resilient students.”

**Bill Walsh, Healthy Building Network:** “Lead, asthma triggers, and other harmful chemicals are avoidable hazards that continue to be brought into our schools in the materials we build with. We should only use the healthiest materials to build our schools and childcare centers, because we can.”

**Elisabeth Krautscheid, Managing Director, Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS):** “Our experience has proven that kids learn better in healthy, well designed and operated schools. The Collaborative for High Performance Schools works with school districts and industry practitioners across the US to foster the development and implementation of national and regional standards for K-12 educational facilities to ensure that every child has the best possible learning environment with the smallest impact on the planet. For this reason, we strongly support National Healthy Schools Day.”

**Gina Desiderio, Director, Communications, Healthy Teen Network (MD):** “How and where youth live, learn, and play matters: we know social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities and disparities. It is of the utmost importance that our nation’s youth have a safe and healthy environment for learning, and we have the responsibility to provide it.”

**Ellie Goldberg, MEd, Founder, Healthy-Kids (MA):** “Parents can’t take it for granted that schools are healthy places and safe havens. Many schools, old and new, have unhealthy conditions and extensive safety code violations. And it is rare to find a school where anyone takes responsibility for health and safety. Healthy Schools Day reminds us we need to speak up to protect children from conditions that put their health and education at risk.”



*Bottled water delivered to school.*

**Jennifer Seydel, PhD, President, Green Schools National Network (WI):** “Green Schools National Network believes that every child should attend a green, healthy, and sustainable school. Addressing lead exposure in schools is a key part in ensuring students can learn and play in safe and healthy environments. We must work together to reduce risks from lead and other chemicals in our nation’s schools.”

**Kenneth Mendez, President and CEO, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America:** “Healthy children learn better. With asthma as the top reason for missed school days, healthy learning environments are necessary, not optional. Removing triggers and toxic substances in classroom environments can keep children out of the hospital from asthma attacks and reduce absenteeism. National Healthy Schools Day is a valuable initiative that works to protect both our children’s health and education.”

**Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, Executive Director, Children's Environmental Health Network:** “We appreciate the leadership of the Healthy Schools Network marking National Healthy Schools Day annually, a time when we collectively acknowledge progress and the vital need to protect children and staff from environmental hazards. Attention to our learning spaces is still a great need. Lead exposures in our learning environments must be addressed. We have a responsibility to ensure that all children and staff can learn and work in schools that do not cause them harm.”



*EPA/5: school chemical storage hazards.*

**Jeff Vincent, PhD, Director, Public Infrastructure Initiatives, Center for Cities + Schools, University of California, Berkeley:** “Every day, millions of pre-school to high school children in the US attend public school in deteriorated and obsolete facilities that harm their health and undermine their academic achievement. Local communities should further amplify their voices to convince our local, state, and federal elected leaders to reverse this status quo.”

**Carolyn P. Kingsley, Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of Georgia:** “Children are our greatest resource. Providing the state of the art protection from toxins and pollution is a right they deserve. In support of National Healthy Schools Day 2018, we commit to this goal. Learning Disabilities Georgia.”

**Leslie Rubinstein, President, LDA of New Jersey:** “Every child deserves to go to school in a healthy and safe environment. Federal and state agencies must make sure that no toxins exist and, if they do, take action to supply the funding to schools to remove them.”

**Analisa Smith, President, LDA of South Carolina:** “Schools should be safe, nurturing environments that foster health and well-being—not threaten it. Reducing chemical exposures in schools is long overdue, and will not only improve academic performance, but will help kids feel better in and out of the classroom, now and in the future.”

**Joy Sue Marsh, LDA of Tennessee:** “Lead is an ongoing concern not only in Memphis, but also in other cities with older housing areas in the state. There is no safe level for lead. Studies reveal that IQ scores may be lowered by at least six points for children exposed to lead. Sources should be quickly identified and steps taken to reduce lead levels.”

**Lou Allen, Utah LDA:** “There are still many older schools in Utah especially in rural townships. There is either insufficient or no yearly screening for possible pollution in water, air, food and soil. Already around the Flint, MI, catastrophe, brief screening demonstrated toxic chemicals in several urban schools but little follow-up occurred.”

#### **SAMPLE NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS DAY 2018 ACTIVITIES**

- **Green Schools National Network** has a blog post highlighting National Healthy Schools Day. See <https://greenschoolsnationalnetwork.org/resolve-make-responsible-chemical-management-priority-national-healthy-schools-day/>
- **Washington, DC-based Mom’s Clean Air Force** will again host a live Twitter Chat on April 3. Register at <https://www.momscleanairforce.org/healthy-schools-day-2018/> to join with MCAF, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Association of School Business Officials, and HS Network, to talk about lead and other issues.
- **Healthy Schools Network** will blog for the **Huffington Post** on No Lead for Kids; HS Network-NY Program is reminding agencies, schools, and communities that school and child care facilities abating lead at the tap with water filters should check and replace filters as needed.
- **Tennessee’s Parents for Students Safety** championed a bill in the Tennessee Legislature that commemorates April 3, 2018 as National Healthy Schools Day.
- **New Jersey Safe Schools Program (NJ SS)** will have an e-newsletter article highlighting 16th National Healthy Schools Day 2018 in its late March issue as one of “top 3 new news items,” reaching thousands of teachers, supervisors/administrators/department chairs throughout the state.
- **Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships** will host tours of three High Performance Schools (MA, ME, and NH). The one-hour tours will consist of a brief project overview followed by an informal exploration of each high performance school, led by the architect and school facility manager.
- **Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Committee (NH)** will work with selected

schools to evaluate green cleaning protocols and review cleaners. They will also provide green cleaning and personal care product comic books and provide a link to a school virtual tour for locations of toxic chemicals in a school lab, art studio, and custodial closet.

## **Recognition: Record 59 Partners for 2018**

Healthy Schools Network thanks its 59 National Healthy Schools Day's agency and NGO partners and extends its warm thanks to the many individuals and organizations nationwide that are making use of this Day to educate their family, friends, neighbors, and members about school and child care infrastructure.

### **21st Century School Fund**

**AASA, the School Superintendents Association**

**American Federation of Teachers (AFT)**

**American Public Health Association (APHA)**

**American School Health Association (ASHA)**

**Association of School Business Officials (ASBO)**

**Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)**

**Beyond Pesticides**

**Building Wellness Institute**

**Center for Cities + Schools, University of California Berkeley**

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-National Center for Environmental Health**

**Children's Environmental Health Institute**

**Children's Environmental Health Network**

**Collaborative for High Performance Schools**

**CT School Indoor Environment Resource Team (CT Dept. of Public Health?)**

**The Deirdre Imus Center for Environmental Health**

**Education Law Center**

**Environmental Defense Fund**

**Field Trip Factory**

**Global Advisors on Smoke-free Policy**

**Green Schools National Network**

**Green Seal**

**Healthy Building Network**

**HealthyKids.info**

**Health Resources in Action**

**Healthy Schools Network**

**Healthy Schools Pennsylvania**

**Healthy Teen Network**

**Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP)**

**IAQnet, LLC.**

**IPM Institute of North America, Inc.**

**Improving Kids' Environment (IKE)**

**InterMountain ESD**

**Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDAA)**

**LDA of Georgia**

**LDA of Illinois**

**LDA of New Jersey**

**LDA of South Carolina**

**LDA of Tennessee**  
**Utah LDA**  
**Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH)**  
**Massachusetts Asthma Action Partnership (MAAP)**  
**Moms Clean Air Force (MCAF)**  
**National Association of School Nurses (NASN)**  
**National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)**  
**National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)**  
**National PTA**  
**NJ Safe Schools Program, Rutgers School of Public Health**  
**New York State Pollution Prevention Institute**  
**New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)**  
**Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP)**  
**Parents for Students Safety**  
**Project Green Schools**  
**Project Learning Tree**  
**Responsible Purchasing Network**  
**Society for Public Health Education (SoPHE)**  
**The Vegetable Project**  
**US Environmental Protection Agency**  
**Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Committee**

Healthy Schools Network is a national nonprofit founded in 1995 to advance children's environmental health in schools and advance better school facilities. It has researched and championed root policy reforms to address the poor conditions of schools and led new calls for public health services for children with suspected exposures in schools. HS Network has received recognitions from US EPA (2001, 2005, 2007, 2017), the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (2007), Green Seal (2014), and the Walter L. Cohen Alumni Association (2016, New Orleans). In 2017, Executive Director Claire Barnett received American University School of Public Affairs' William K. Reilly Award for Environmental Leadership and the American Public Health Association's David P. Rall Award for contributions to public health through science-based advocacy. For more information, see [www.healthyschools.org](http://www.healthyschools.org).

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[www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org](http://www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org)