



INDOOR AIR QUALITY

FLORIDA PTA POSITION

The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to require proactive evaluation of school buildings for indoor air quality and to adopt measures to improve air quality, including raising the minimum ventilation rate to 15 cubic feet per minute (cfm) of outside air per occupant. PTA local units are urged to educate communities about the causes of Indoor Air Quality problems and about action that must be taken or avoided to prevent a recurrence of the problems.

Background

Indoor air pollution can have significant health effects. In recent years, comparative risk studies performed by EPA and its Science Advisory Board have consistently ranked indoor air pollution among the top five environmental risks to public health. There is substantial evidence that indoor environmental exposure to allergens, such as dust mites, other pests, and molds play a role in triggering asthma symptoms. These allergens are found in the school indoor environment. Good indoor air quality is an important component of a healthy indoor environment, and can help schools reach their primary goal.*

**EPA- IAQ Tools for Schools Kit - IAQ Coordinator's Guide*



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Talking Points

- Children may be especially susceptible to air pollution. The same concentration of pollutants can result in higher body burden in children than adults because children breathe a greater volume of air relative to their body weight.
- Good indoor air quality contributes to a favorable learning environment for students, and for the performance of teachers and staff.
- Reduction in staff and student absenteeism.

Unique Aspects of Schools

Unlike other buildings, managing schools involves the combined responsibility for public funds and child safety issues, which can cause strong reactions from concerned parents and the general community. Other unique aspects include:

- occupants are close together, with the typical school having approximately four times as many occupants as office buildings for the same amount of floor space
- budgets are tight, with maintenance often receiving the largest cut during budget reductions
- the presence of a variety of pollutant sources, including art and science supplies, industrial and vocational arts, home economic classes, and gyms
- a large number of heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning systems, placing an added strain on maintenance staff
- as schools add space, the operation and maintenance of each addition is often different schools sometimes use rooms, portable classrooms, or buildings which were not originally designed to service the unique requirements of schools.*

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