

# BMP #7

## Why Should My School Encourage a Healthy School Environment?

### Indoor Air Quality

Poor indoor air quality, ventilation and circulation has a proven negative effect on concentration, attendance, and student performance. In addition poor air quality increases students and staff to increased risks of fatigue, nausea and asthma.



### Drinking Water.

Contaminated with lead, metals, oils or pesticides present a serious health risk. One out of every five schools with its own water supply violated the Safe Drinking Act in the past decade according to the EPA.

### Toxic Pest Control

Spraying toxic pest control substances near students and the school grounds has known links to difficulty breathing, skin and eye irritations, developmental issues with speech, language, learning, memory and attention, links to cancer, neurological or hormone problems



### Reduce Asthma Triggers

Asthma is the most common chronic disorder in childhood, affecting an estimated 6.2 million children under 18 according to NIEHS. Studies from NIEHS, the Department of Housing and Urban Development show direct correlations between reducing indoor allergens and numbers of asthmatic attacks.

**School Nutrition** Research shows children who eat nutritiously have better standardized test scores, better behavior, and less hyperactivity than those with high glycemic indexes. Also, children who eat healthy foods are more likely to make better food and nutrition choices as adults—overweight children tend to become overweight adults.



*Making the right food choices, together.*



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# How Can My School be a Healthy School?

### Facts

- According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 16-33% of children in the US are Obese
- High fat and cholesterol in foods is linked to high blood pressure and high cholesterol in children.
- One in five teens has high cholesterol
- 76% of NYC Children do not get 5 daily servings of fruits and vegetables
- 1 out of 10 school aged children has asthma
- Each year, 10.5 million school days are missed due to asthma
- Pesticides affect humans through: ingestion, inhalation and dermal absorption
- Children are more susceptible to toxic chemicals in pesticides because of size, metabolism and growth.

### Ideas

- Encourage your school system to use non-processed foods, to buy locally and increase whole grains, lower sodium and reduced fat choices for students.
- Ask your school to join Michelle Obama's Let's Move Campaign
- Enforce no-smoking policies on school grounds and parking lots
- Use integrated pest management to prevent cockroach and other pest problems that trigger asthma symptoms
- Reduce mold and moisture that trigger asthma—fix leaks and moisture problems and dry wet areas within 48 hours to prevent mold growth.
- Use "green cleaners"
- Implement a schedule to dust and vacuum the school regularly
- Wash stuffed toys regularly and keep rooms clutter free
- Remove classroom animals from school if possible—implement a pet visit policy
- Encourage schools to switch to dry-erase boards or use dust free chalk to eliminate chalk dust, a common asthma trigger
- Implement a 'fragrance free' school zone
- Encourage the use of dehumidifiers
- Make sure classrooms where art supplies are used and locker rooms where mold can grow are well ventilated
- Encourage the use of 'green' products in pest management versus toxic chemicals