



13TH ANNUAL NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS DAY - APRIL 7, 2015

For immediate release

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13th Annual National Healthy Schools Day: Day of Action with a Big Message

Thursday, April 2, 2015

Activities and partners were released today for the 13th annual National Healthy School Day on April 7th by Healthy Schools Network, which has coordinated the Day of public awareness since 2003. The Network is thanking and highlighting Healthy Schools Day's 34 partners including the US EPA, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the US Department of Education, the American Public Health Association, the National Environmental Health Association, 23 Statements of Support, and an interactive map of 24 local, state and national activities registered to date from coast to coast. Events continue through mid-April.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, Executive Director, American Public Health Association, said, "Our children deserve safe and healthy environments to grow and learn, but their health and education are at risk when they are placed in schools with poor indoor air quality and other environmental hazards such as physical structural problems and mold."

Said **Claire Barnett, Executive Director of the Network.** "This is the big message. Despite federal and state budget cuts and heavy pressures on our schools, Healthy Schools Day partners and participants are voicing their awareness and appreciation for the special training and work it takes to create and to sustain healthy learning environments in every school for every child."

Across the US, there are 130,000 public and private K-12 schools enrolling some 55 million children and employing about 7 million adults – in all 20% of the total US population is in schools every day. Yet, EPA reports that half of all schools have problems with Indoor 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. Polluted indoor environments are already contributing to health and attendance problems. Specifically they contribute to rising asthma cases, asthma hospitalizations during the school year, absenteeism, and other problems such as problems concentrating and headaches, as well as cancer and other long-term diseases.

Added **Otha Thornton, President, National PTA,** "A healthy school environment that meets

the needs of the whole child — emotional, environmental, intellectual, physical and social — is essential for student success. It has long been a top priority of National PTA to ensure all children have a healthy and safe environment in which to thrive and learn.”

Added the **Network’s Board of Director President Chip Halverson, ND, of Oregon**, “In my work as a teacher and now a physician, every day I am working with children and adults who are adversely affected by the polluting chemicals they can smell taste and touch. There are so many more kids enrolled today with disabilities it is hard to know where to start, but 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.”

To see the full 2015 Statements of Support, including those of federal partners, and to see the map of activities, visit www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org.

A Sampling of Registered Activities (as of March 31)

- National Twitter Chat, 2 PM Eastern, April 7th, hosted by Moms Clean Air Force with Healthy Schools Network
- Webinar for **New York State** Schools and Communities on Buying Green Products, hosted by Healthy Schools Network, with the NYS School Facilities Association, New York State United Teachers, and Healthy Indoors Magazine
- Clarke County, **Georgia** schools are undertaking several educational outreach events on cleaning, preventing mold and moisture, and a presentation to the Board of Education
- A Springfield, **Oregon** elementary school is conducting a building walk-through
- In **California**, the Responsible Purchasing Network and Ventura Unified School District are conducting a workshop for the California Association of School Business Officials on green purchasing
- In **Pennsylvania**, the City of Philadelphia School District is hosting parent and community workshops on reducing asthma triggers in homes and schools
- The **Wisconsin** Department of Public Instruction will release an updated Green & Healthy Schools application
- And more.... See www.NationalHealthySchoolsDay.org to connect with these activities and others.

Healthy Schools Network was founded 20 years ago this year in Albany, NY as a not for profit with a mission of ensuring that every child has an environmentally safe and healthy school that is clean and in good repair. For more information about the organization and its impact, visit www.HealthySchools.org.



