

Let's Build Momentum Together in 2012

Over the last few years we have been blessed to gain the support of educators and others to help us provide informative and quality environmental health related resources and information to you, our partners in school health. From listening to our school representatives, we understand the pressing challenges around budgets and student learning. We know that you need a credible and collaborative partner to better serve your mission, thus we are pleased to introduce our newest team member.



Margo and family

Alanna Conley has joined the team at EPA Region 10 as Healthy Schools Coordinator. Located in the Portland EPA office, Alanna hails from Atlanta, Georgia where she worked closely with states and tribes on water resource programs focused on human and ecological health protection. She also served as a member of a volunteer federal agency team which provided support to local schools districts.

By adding Alanna's strong collaborative skills to the Region 10 Schools Team, we gain momentum. Over the last few months we have been listening to the needs of partners just like you. These conversations will be foundational in the strategic planning process we are launching this month. Our goal is to provide an attainable outline of short and long-term strategies to guide us in our dedication to creating healthy schools and healthy vibrant children; ultimately, the health of all involved in the serious business of education.

We invite you to share this newsletter by printing it and distributing it in your teacher lounges, offices or other places throughout your

school or district. Many of the links are designed to be shared, electronically or in print, with parents and community members too.

While Alanna is enjoying our "northwest hospitality" and the lush beauty of the region she is eager to meet you. Her office is wide open to questions or requests. Give her a call or email: conley.alanna@epa.gov or 503-326-6831.


Margo Young

EPA Region 10 Children's Environmental Health
young.margo@epa.gov
or 206-553-1287


Alanna Conley

Healthy Schools Coordinator
conley.alanna@epa.gov
or 503-326-6831

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Watch for the spring newsletter in May to learn more about the R10 Schools Team

Archived
Editions
of Healthy
School News

March Call to Action

Stay tuned for opportunity to provide input!

This March, EPA will open the public comment period for the draft K-12 State School Environmental Health Program Guidelines. Your comments will provide crucial assistance to the document and help EPA better serve your needs. These voluntary guidelines will assist states, tribes, and territories to establish and implement environmental health programs in K-12 schools and help promote safe, healthy and productive school environments for students and staff, while saving money for local school districts. Watch for details in March on EPA's website for schools (www.epa.gov/schools). Instructions for public comment will be sent to you who receive this newsletter. Thank you in advance for your input.

Why Toxic-Free Art Supplies

Paints, glues, and felt tip markers are so familiar that we don't think of them as hazardous. Yet the ingredients in many art and hobby supplies include harmful chemicals. Exposure to these hazardous substances can occur from ingestion, inhalation, or absorption through the skin.

You can reduce the risks to student health and the environment if you choose safer alternatives. Less-hazardous glues, paints, and markers are available, and just as much fun to use!



Check out EPA's library of information and links to help make safer choices for your students. http://www.epa.gov/oppt/library/pubs/archive/buy_clean/docs/epp_art.htm.

By [reading the label of art supplies](#) you can determine safety for the appropriate age of the child.



Radon Wears an Invisibility Cloak

As those of us immersed in the adventures of Harry Potter know, we never wanted that invisibility cloak to fall in the hands of our enemy. But one enemy wearing an invisibility cloak is radon.

Even though January is the declared Radon Action Month, radon does not follow an annual calendar. This invisible radioactive gas seeps into buildings undetected through foundation cracks and can reach harmful levels if trapped indoors. Overall, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. It is responsible for about 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year and has been found at high levels in schools, homes, and commercial buildings. A simple first step in saving a life may be by simply testing your school.

For more information visit the EPA Radon webpage <http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/schoolrn.html> or contact Davis Zhen in our Seattle office at zhen.davis@epa.gov or 206-553-7660.



In The News

“Are Schools Making Kids Sick?”

During the CNN Special Report on Toxic America, aired last month, Dr. Sanjay Gupta presented case studies estimating that one third or more of U.S. schools have mold, dust and other indoor air problems serious enough to provoke respiratory issues like asthma in students and teachers.

About one in 10 children in the United States now has asthma, which causes them to miss an average of four days of school a year, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Schools are more densely occupied than office buildings, and children are particularly at risk because their bodies are still developing and they breathe in more air, pound for pound, than adults. But children aren't the only ones affected by school air. Teachers are also at risk per surveys conducted in several national school districts.

Researchers and others who follow the issue say school air problems have probably been exacerbated in recent years by funding cutbacks that have resulted in less money for building upkeep and maintenance.

If you are concerned about indoor air quality in your school, you can use the resources in EPA's Tools for Schools Action Kit (<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/actionkit.html>) to help identify potential problems and solutions.

To view the CNN Special Report, follow this link: <http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/14/health/school-indoor-air-pollution/index.html>.

Missed the 2012 Deadlines? - 2013 Starts Now!

Two excellent programs with February deadlines should not be overlooked. So for those who were unable to make these 2012 deadlines, preparing ahead for 2013 should be on your list. The first program is the national Green Ribbon Schools Award Program. The online application and tutorial provides everything you need to start now and the Washington State team has an excellent mentorship program to assist you.

Green Ribbon School Award – 2013 Opportunity #1

Launched by U.S. Department of Education the Green Ribbon Schools Award is the first comprehensive federal recognition program for schools related to environment, health and education. National studies indicate there are many benefits of a comprehensive green schools program such as decreased energy costs and reduced environmental impact, improved student and staff health and productivity, enhanced critical thinking skills, improved student performance and increased student engagement, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

The Green Ribbon Schools Award recognizes public and private elementary, middle and high schools in reaching achievement in the following areas: 1) increasing environmental and sustainability literacy, 2) reducing environmental footprint of schools, 3) improving learning conditions, and 4) creating a healthy community for students and staff.

In 2012, Oregon and Washington are both participating in the program. Watch for more information this summer and the announcement of the award winners.

Applications for the Oregon Sustainable Schools Award.

Visit <http://www.sustainableschools.org/sosi/oregon-award-program> for the online application, scoring matrix, and an informational webinar.

Contact Lori Porter Stole, lstole@zerowaste.org.

Applications for the Washington Green Ribbon Award.

Visit <http://www.k12.wa.us/EducationAwards/GreenRibbon/default.aspx> for an online and printable application, guidance document with supporting information and resources, scoring matrix, mentor assistance, and more.

Visit the above website on Washington Green Ribbon Schools to view other states who are participating, or to encourage your state to participate next year.

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html>

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Raise a Flag to Health

School Flag Program Alerts Vulnerable Students and Community

Here is a high-flying and inexpensive alert system for teachers, parents and coaches to modify outdoor activities when air quality is unhealthy. The AIRnow.gov School Flag Program www.airnow.gov/schoolflag is designed to raise awareness with different colored flags based on a day-by-day link to your local air quality conditions and forecasts. Since air pollution is a trigger for asthma in children and teenagers who are especially sensitive to the harmful effects of air pollution this daily link can be of value to the entire community.



A set of five flags usually cost under \$100. A reduced price is offered if a quality of flags is ordered so you may wish to join with other schools to order your flags. Want to check the air quality today in your area? Click [here](#), add your zip code, and see what color flag you would fly today.

For more information or to start a program at your school, contact: rogers.donna@epa.gov. You can also register at <http://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.schoolflagprogram> and have your school displayed on the EPA website and receive a membership certificate.

Already have a school flag program? Share your flag flying story with us to feature in a future newsletter.

Save the Date and Celebrate

Are you looking for articles and new methods to engage parents, teachers and your community this spring? Here are quick and easy links with step-by-step instructions and event planning guides to help you plan events, articles for your newsletters and methods to engage your community. Working together, in partnership, we can create lasting change.

10th Anniversary of Healthy Schools Day

A Decade of Dedication - April 24

Visit <http://www.nationalhealthyschoolsday.org/> for clever and change making ways to celebrate this year's Healthy Schools Day, April 24th. For that matter, to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of Healthy Schools Day you might want to celebrate all week long! Engage students, staff and the community with activities suggested and coordinated by Healthy Schools Network in cooperation with US EPA and the Council of Educational Facility Planners International. This promotes the use of US EPA's [IAQ Tools for Schools program](#).



School Building Week - April 11 through April 15

School Building Week provides an opportunity to draw national attention to the importance of well planned, healthy, high performance, safe and sustainable schools that enhance student achievement and community vitality. More information: <http://www.cefp.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3338>

Earth Day 2012 and EPA Pick Five for the Environment – April 22

Forty two and going strong!



Started by Senator Gaylord Nelson in 1970, Earth Day will celebrate 42 years. In 1990, it was embraced internationally

and today more than 500 million people in 175 countries observe this day. If you are looking for creative ways to raise awareness for the Earth's environment and to encourage conservation efforts consider pick five and get on the map! <http://www.epa.gov/earthday/share.html>

National Asthma Awareness Month Kicks Off May 1

Asthma affects more than 23 million Americans, including an estimated seven million children. Successful asthma management requires the attention and collaboration of many. You may wish to share this online quiz with your staff and community so they can better understand why it takes a village to successfully manage this disease. Quiz: It Takes A Village. <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/sciencenb/asthma/ReducingExposure.html>

Resources, materials and activities: <http://www.epa.gov/asthma/awm/index.html>

Region 10 contact: Davis Zhen at zhen.davis@epa.gov or 206-553-7660

(You may want to launch your School's AIRNow Flag program to commemorate Asthma Awareness. See the Raise a Flag to Health article)

What's Happening In Your State

Washington

Washington Healthy Schools Summit - May 17-18 at the Seattle Airport Marriott

This year's Summit sponsored by Washington Office of Schools and Public Instruction, WA Department of Health, Seattle Children's Hospital will explore how schools can effectively build and manage partnerships with students, families, and the community to create healthy schools.

More information at: <http://treeswing.org/healthyschoolssummit/>.

Contact information:

Washington State University, [Dana Colwell@wsu.edu](mailto:Dana.Colwell@wsu.edu) or 253-507-8506

Alaska

FREE Alaska Tribal Air Toolkit! This resource includes DVDs, fact sheets, and outreach ideas to help address five common sources of air pollution in rural Alaska including indoor air quality, diesel fuel, solid waste burning, road dust, and wood smoke. The toolkit is an excellent resource for classroom or parent or community meetings.

Order FREE toolkit at: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/TRIBAL.NSF/programs/tribalairtoolkit>.

The Alaska School Site Selection Criteria and Evaluation Handbook

The Alaska Department of Education has released the updated school siting resource. Working with the Alaska Department of Transportation and other partners, the revised handbook includes considerations such as safe routes to school and a site selection matrix allowing districts to add their own criteria.

Online handbook: <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/Facilities/publications/SiteSelection.pdf>.

Oregon

No Cost Drinking Water Well Sampling for Pesticides

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is partnering with USDA to collect and analyze water samples as part of free voluntary nationwide water testing for schools that are served by drinking water wells. They will be sampling for over 100 pesticides and pesticide breakdown products in March. Data collected will be published by USDA in an Annual Summary but school names will be kept confidential and will not be released.

Information: Pesticide Data program: www.ams.usda.gov/pdp or call 703-330-2300.

Idaho

Workshops on asbestos, lead, and PCBs - February 18 and February 21

EPA is conducting free workshops on asbestos, lead, and PCBs in Idaho this month in Coeur d'Alene on February 18 and in Boise on February 21. The workshops are intended as compliance assistance for staff responsible to comply with applicable regulations to their work and school environments. This is also an outreach to parents, families, teachers, and students who may be impacted by exposure. To attend one of the free workshops scheduled, or to arrange a free workshop for twenty or more people in your school or community, contact tartaglia.maria@epa.gov.

School Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Workshops

Boise on March 6, Pocatello on April 3, and Coeur d'Alene on April 10

Washington State University Extension and Idaho's Department of Health and Welfare are sponsoring three one-day workshops to address the connection between building maintenance/building performance and indoor air quality in Boise on March 6, Pocatello on April 3, and Coeur d'Alene on April 10.

Rich Prill, Building Science and Indoor Environmental Quality Specialist at WSU Extension, will conduct the trainings. He has assisted IIEP staff in conducting hundreds of school IAQ assessments in Idaho. Building professionals will learn to save money and improve occupant comfort and productivity with integrated energy efficiency and good IAQ strategies. Practical assessment tools and sampling equipment will be demonstrated. Building maintenance staff, both the private and public sector, are encouraged to attend. Scholarships are available to help with travel costs.

Contact information: Jim Faust, Manager, and Indoor Environment Program faustj@dhw.idaho.gov at 208-334-5717.

Training - Links to Discovery

Clean, Green, and Healthy Tribal Schools Webinar Series

<http://www.epa.gov/region8/TribalSchoolsWebinarsEarly2012.pdf>

Three workshops left in this educational series. We are awaiting information on when archived copies can be viewed for the first workshops in this informative series. Watch our newsletter for updates.

Register at: www.epa.gov/region8/tribalschools

February 8, 2012 2:30 PM PST

Recycling, Composting & Gardening in Tribal Schools

Speakers: Virginia Till, EPA; Diane Jourdan, Oneida and Stockbridge Tribe

February 15, 2012 2:30 PM PST

Indoor Air

Speakers: Mansel Nelson; Graylynn Jaysue Hudson, Northern Arizona University Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals

February 22, 2012 2:30 PM PST

Energy & Water Conservation in Tribal Schools

Speakers: Deenise Becenti, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority

February 27-29, 2012, Denver, CO

Growing Green & Healthy Schools for All Children 2nd Annual Green Schools National Conference

Conference Highlights include: over 100 breakout sessions focused on all aspects of green and healthy schools; Student and Parent Summits; Green Jobs Showcase, and more. Register now using our DISCOUNT CODE: califgreenschools.

More Info/Register: <http://www.greenschoolsnationalconference.org/index.php>

Healthy School NEWS is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10. Region 10 includes the states of Washington, Idaho, Alaska and Oregon and the tribes within those boundaries. For general information about school environmental health or to provide feedback on this newsletter, please contact Alanna Conley at conley.alanna@epa.gov. To be added or removed from the distribution list, please email pollow.george@epa.gov with your request. Contact Region 10's Public Environmental Resource Center, the education, publication and information gateway to EPA's Region 10 Office, for free publications and educational resources for your school. Call at (800) 424-4EPA or email epa-seattle@epa.gov.

EPA Environmental Education: www.epa.gov/enviroed/

EPA Children's Environmental Health: www.epa.gov/children