

Connecticut Coalition for Healthy School Environments

Spring 2026 Newsletter

Celebrate National Healthy Schools Week April 13-17

Spring is here and so is National Healthy Schools Week! You can celebrate with us by spreading the word about indoor air quality (IAQ) and by taking action to support healthy indoor air in your communities.

Now more than ever, there is a need for education and engagement around IAQ in our schools. To help with this, we are promoting the [National Healthy Schools Network's webinar series](#), featuring expert panels discussing past progress and areas for further collaboration. Celebrate National Healthy Schools Week by attending an informative webinar (and don't forget to share with your friends and colleagues!) These programs are FREE and open to the public.

National Healthy Schools Day Events

Monday, April 13 | 2:00 - 3:00 pm EDT

[Congressional Leadership and School Funding: Outlook for Federal Action](#)

A conversation with **Congressman Bobby Scott** (VA), author of [Rebuild America's School Act of 2026](#), on the legislative outlook for school funding for 2026 and beyond. Moderated by **Tracy Washington Enger**, MS, Healthy Schools Network and former EPA Indoor Air Division (retired).

Tuesday, April 14 | 11:00 am - 12:00 noon EDT

[Federal Research & Children's Environmental Health Outlook](#)

Featuring NIOSH Director **John Howard**, MD, and EPA Deputy Associate Administrator for Science **Maureen Gwinn**, PhD, DABT. Moderated by **Chris Zarba**, former director, EPA Office of the Science Advisory Board, and EPA senior executive (retired).

Wednesday, April 15 | 1:00 - 2:30 pm EDT

[Climate Resilience for Schools: Why Act Now?](#), featuring climate resilience experts **Joel Smith**, MPP, climate change impacts and adaptation researcher (retired), and **Joel Scheraga**, PhD, EPA senior executive (retired) and Senior Advisor, Healthy Schools Network.

Thursday, April 16 | 1:00 - 2:30 pm EDT

[Indoor Air Quality and Schools: State Policy Pathways and Implementation Strategies](#), featuring **Representative Megan Cotter**, RI House of Representatives, **Jason Hartke**, Executive Vice President, International WELL Building Institute, **Georgia Lagoudas**, PhD, Senior Fellow, Brown University School of Public Health, and **Rebecca Padilla**, MS, Senior Manager, Nationwide Health Promotions, American Lung Association. Moderated by **Kenneth Mendez**, President and CEO, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

Friday, April 17 | 11:30 am - 12:30 pm EDT

[Game-Changing Federal Legislation for Healthy Schools](#)

Remarks by **Congressman Paul Tonko** (NY) focusing on the bipartisan Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act ([H.R. 5123](#)). Moderated by **Tracy Washington Enger**, MS, Healthy Schools Network and former EPA Indoor Air Division (retired).

Friday, April 17 | 1:00 - 2:30 pm EDT

[The Movement at 30: Reflections & the Road Ahead](#)

Capstone event celebrating National Healthy Schools Day with a conversation reflecting on the evolution of the healthy schools movement and identifying priorities for the next decade. Panelists include **Lynn Goldman**, MD, MPH, MS, Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health and Dean Emeritus, Milken Institute School of Public Health, George Washington University, and former Assistant Administrator, U.S. EPA,

and **William Datema**, DrPH, MS, MCHES, Chief Executive Officer, Society for Public Health Education and President-Elect, National PTA. Moderated by **Claire Barnett**, founder and former Executive Director, Healthy Schools Network.

Maintaining Progress on School IAQ

For more than 30 years, the Healthy Schools movement has helped transform how communities address indoor air quality, toxic exposures, and other environmental hazards.

In Connecticut, our coalition has successfully advocated for policies to better equip local and regional boards of education with the resources, protocols, and supports needed to promote healthy IAQ in school buildings. These include establishment of annual school building inspections, comprehensive 5-year HVAC systems evaluations, and school construction reimbursement grants. This work supports needed HVAC improvements that protect the health of students and school faculty alike.

School HVAC Inspections

School HVAC Assessments

In 2022, Connecticut required local and regional boards of education to complete ventilation assessments at each school building under its jurisdiction. **Initial assessments must be completed by July 1, 2027, and every five years thereafter.**

Municipalities must perform testing at a minimum of 20% of their schools each year, with all schools to be completed by July 1, 2031.

Underlined language is taken directly from the legislative text and rearranged in a user-friendly way. There are three steps to the process:

Step 1- Ventilation Verification Assessment

A uniform inspection and evaluation of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system within each school building, performed by a certified Testing, Adjusting and Balancing Technician, a certified industrial hygienist, or a mechanical engineer. It should be noted that support from additional vendors (control, mechanical, or maintenance contractors) may be required to perform the assessment.

What it includes:

- Testing for maximum filter efficiency
- Measurements of outside air delivery rates
- Inspection and verification of the condition of HVAC system components
- Verification of routine operation and systems maintenance in accordance with ASHRAE indoor ventilation standards
- Appropriate reporting and record keeping with local boards of education

Step 2- Design Professional Review

The ventilation verification assessment report is delivered to a licensed mechanical engineer, certified industrial hygienist, or mechanical design professional. The design professional will issue a report to include any corrective actions necessary to be performed to the mechanical ventilation system or the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning infrastructure to achieve compliance with current ventilation standards.

What the Design Professional's Report includes:

- A review of the data collected in the ventilation verification report and evaluation of whether school HVAC systems are providing appropriate ventilation
- Recommendation for installation of filters, carbon dioxide sensors, and additional components
- Recommendation for any additional maintenance, repairs, or upgrades needed

Step 3- Remediation Phase

The results of the ventilation verification and the report from the design professional must be made available for public inspection and posted on the website of each jurisdiction and school (if applicable). With this information, municipalities can begin to implement recommendations of the design professional.

Steps to implementation:

- Design professionals will determine cost effective solutions to address HVAC repair and remediation needs
- Apply for state grants or federal funding
- Begin work on needed repairs, replacements, and system upgrades
- Any corrective actions must be performed by a licensed contractor!

Annual IAQ Reports and IAQ Teams Due by December 31, 2026

As of January of 2024, each Connecticut school district is required to conduct an annual walkthrough inspection for each of its buildings, using an EPA "Tools for Schools" approved program.

Since school occupants spend the majority of their time in classrooms, it is recommended that the annual walkthrough inspection cover all classrooms and be conducted by trained "Tools for Schools" teams. These teams should include the school head custodian, a teacher, and the school nurse.

Once completed, districts must post the results on school and BoE websites and certify compliance with DAS (both the annual and 5-year inspections are prerequisites for school districts to be eligible for HVAC/IAQ project reimbursement by CT Dept. of Administrative Services).

School Construction Reimbursement Grants

As of 2025, the CT Dept. of Administrative Services has the authority to approve grants to school districts to reimburse boards of ed for costs related to HVAC upgrades and

other improvements to school indoor air quality. Districts will be reimbursed on a sliding scale (20-80%), depending on financial need.

School HVAC reimbursement grants provide critical assistance for districts experiencing financial difficulties, but *local and regional BoE's are responsible for scheduling their inspections and covering the upfront cost of financing necessary repairs/upgrades to school HVAC systems.*

For more information regarding eligibility, please visit the [CT Dept. of Administrative Services' school Non-Priority Project website.](#)



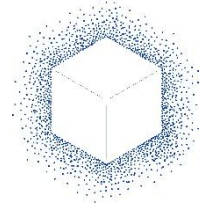
INDOOR AIR QUALITY INITIATIVE

Breathing clean air keeps students healthy, focused, and ready to learn. The UConn Indoor Air Quality Initiative has launched a FREE grants-in-aid program designed specifically to improve the classroom air quality in Connecticut K-12 public schools. The program provides schools with all of the necessary materials to build highly effective DIY air purifiers. Each participating school will also have access to our hands-on STEM-aligned lesson plans and will receive 5 real-time air quality sensors for classroom use. Featuring engaging visual displays, these classroom ready monitors spark student curiosity by making invisible air data visible and easy to understand.

Schools are invited to apply by submitting an interest form. Full program details and implementation resources are available on our website.

Apply today: <https://s.uconn.edu/iaq>

For More Information Contact: iaq@uchc.edu



Looking Forward to Another Successful Year

As we look forward to another National Healthy Schools Week, we thank you for your support and continued attention towards improving our indoor school environments. Our efforts do not stop here! Your involvement is critical as we continue the important work of advocacy and education around school IAQ.

To stay informed of our progress and learn more about how you can help promote healthy IAQ in our schools, contact MyVoice@cea.org. There is lots of work yet to be done to support healthy schools and together, we make a difference!

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The Connecticut Coalition for Healthy School Environments was started in 2022 as an ad-hoc coalition of parents, educators, health care workers, labor organizations, contractors, school faculty & facilities managers, and environmental justice organizations. We work to protect the health of students & school employees through public education and advocacy, and we promote policies that foster healthy indoor environments in our public schools.