

School Health Watch

The Newsletter of the Illinois Healthy Schools Campaign

Healthy
Schools
Campaign



Making Illinois Schools Environmentally Healthy Places to Learn & Work

Summer 2004

www.healthyschoolscampaign.org

Healthy & High-Performing Schools

Integrated Design and Teamwork Help Make Schools Work for Students and Staff

School districts around the country are struggling to cope with inadequate facilities. In a recent rating of the country's infrastructure, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave schools a "D-" and stated that "75% of our nation's school buildings remain inadequate to meet the needs of school children." And according to the US General Accounting Office, more than 70% of Illinois schools are in need of at least one major environmental repair.

Substantial school construction has occurred in the past several years. Schools in Illinois have allocated more than \$6 billion for construction since 1998. Despite record deficits and intense pressure to cut costs, there is still a need to invest in new schools, and constructing healthy and high performing school (HHPS) buildings can effectively improve student health and performance, *and* reduce long-term operational expenses.

Building Healthy and High-Performing Schools

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 calls for information and technical assistance to schools utilizing HHPS designs. While Congress has not funded this program, many see this as the beginning of a movement towards healthy and energy efficient school building design nationwide. HHPS buildings advance the core mission of school facilities—to provide the best possible education for students. The end result of a healthy and high-performing approach to building is producing a facility that supports the educational process.

The Concept

Integration is key to HHPS designs. With an integrated approach, an architect can, for example, design a classroom to include natural daylight. This, in turn, would mean that fewer electric lights and less air conditioning would be needed due to less heat generated in the classrooms from lighting units.

Healthy Design – A Statewide Movement?

The Healthy Schools Campaign is working with the Illinois Capital Development Board to spearhead a taskforce to create a HHPS guidance document. This taskforce of more than 35 educational professionals, architects, public health officials and others have committed to providing their expertise to help guide Illinois towards a healthier school building process. With the

taskforce, HSC plans to create both an accepted definition of an Illinois healthy and high performing school building and a framework that will assist school districts in constructing a HHPS building.

While there is currently no HHPS program in Illinois, there are a handful of schools that are working independently toward HHPS construction in their community.

Although no single project encompasses every element of a healthy and high-performing school, they all represent excellent school design and highlight the desire in local communities to provide quality learning environments that are sustainable, energy efficient and healthy.

Some schools that are constructing healthier buildings are:

Cuba School District in Cuba has incorporated geothermal heating and cooling, photovoltaic cells to help power lighting, bleachers and carpets from 100% recycled materials, and energy-efficient windows.

Mater Dei High School in Breese has integrated daylighting and a geothermal heating and cooling system.

Thornton Township School District in Thornton has implemented a system of on-site power generation to reduce energy costs and is planning on recycling lost waste heat from their power system to heat the school.

Matteson School District in Matteson has implemented geothermal heating and cooling, and implemented extensive site planning to optimize for wind patterns and minimal noise from external sources.

In addition to many ongoing HHPS projects throughout the state, Chicago Public Schools has embarked on a new era in which every one of their new schools will be built to a stringent "Chicago Standard." This standard is based on the US Green Building Council's guidelines for energy-efficient and sustainable buildings. The first scheduled "healthy" school broke ground on May 12 and it features drought-resistant plants on the roof, solar panels, harvested rainwater and flooring made of recycled glass.





Fact File On the Vend...

>> One or more vending machines are available in:

- 26% of elementary schools
- 62% of middle/junior high schools
- 95% of high schools

>> The availability of unhealthy foods in vending machines has been linked to low fruit and vegetable consumption among children.

>> An extra can of sweetened soda per day can add 15.6 pounds per year in body weight.

>> By the time they are 14 years old, 32% of young women and 52% of young men are consuming three or more servings of soda a day.

>> Schools in Minnesota began replacing junk food with healthier alternatives in their vending machines in 2001. Paired with a pricing and placement strategy, they greatly increased sales of nutritious food items and did not lose revenue.

Taking the Junk Out of Schools

Working with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Food Services & Warehousing Department, HSC helped convene the first meeting of the CPS Taskforce to Promote Healthy Eating & Smart Choices on May 11.

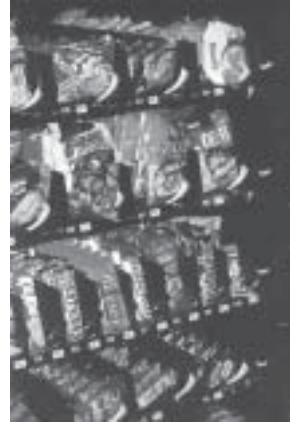
This taskforce has been convened to build a partnership between institutions, CPS and all members of the CPS community (parents, teachers, administrators and others) to promote lifelong healthy eating and active lifestyles among students. This taskforce has been convened in recognition of the following:

- 1) Good nutrition is important to learning and academic achievement.
- 2) Learning healthy eating habits is importance to the student's quality of life and disease prevention.
- 3) The interconnectedness of healthy eating to family, community and culture.
- 4) The important role that schools and the school community can play in teaching healthy eating habits.

Formation of the taskforce was announced along with CPS' new vending policy by Arne Duncan, Chief Executive Officer for CPS, on April 20. Under the proposed policy, carbonated beverages and junk food would be banned from vending machines in all CPS schools. In turn, vending machines would be stocked with healthier items.

The decision follows a national trend to eliminate the sale of junk food in school vending machines in efforts to combat childhood overweight and obesity. CPS currently has a vending machine contract with Coca-Cola that does not place restrictions on the nutritional value of the beverages being offered.

For more information about the taskforce, please contact Camille Reid, School Food Policy Director, at camille@healthyschoolscampaign.org.



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While it is believed that healthy and energy efficient design costs more up front, the savings from energy and water conservation will pay back in just a few years.

We're Not Alone

Although the concept of HHPS design may seem new to some, it's a concept that has been building momentum across the country. Many states have already identified that schools will benefit greatly from HHPS design. California, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Minnesota have all established healthy design programs. While the specifics of their programs vary, there are many key similarities. Tobie Bernstein from the Environmental Law Institute identified four strategies these diverse states had in common:

- **Develop state capacity to assist local school building programs**, including developing public-private groups to support the process and strengthening inter-agency coordination
- **Build local capacity to pursue HHPS design**, including creating state-specific materials on high-performing design and providing training and technical assistance
- **Establish requirements related to HHPS design**, including requiring consideration high-performing goals and establishing specific standards or practices for schools
- **Provide financial support for school districts**, including increasing state construction funding, establishing pilot projects and other financial incentives

For more information about the HSC taskforce on HHPS, contact State Policy Director, Mark Bishop at mark@healthyschoolscampaign.org.



Healthy Schools Campaign in Action

Not Sitting Idle on Diesel

This year, HSC-in partnership with the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago and Representative Sandra Pihos-passed a House resolution to encourage school districts to limit diesel engine bus idling. Copies of the resolution, along with bus idling information and a short survey, were sent to all 900 school district Superintendents. HSC is now compiling this data, which will help determine how to best limit student exposure to diesel engine exhaust. For more information, contact Mark Bishop at mark@healthyschoolscampaign.org.

It's Good to Be Green

As part of its Green Clean campaign, HSC held "Towards Healthy School Environments: An In-Service



"Training Day for Chicago Public Schools Engineers" at Whitney Young Magnet High School on April 14. Almost 200 engineers attended workshops to learn about cleaning for health, custodial staff management techniques, and environmentally preferable cleaning products and equipment. To learn more, contact Louella Hung at louella@healthyschoolscampaign.org.

Laugh It Up

"Laughing Matters," a benefit to support HSC, was held on March 4 at The Second City, e.t.c. in Chicago. Despite torrential rains that evening, the event was a success and generated \$20,000. More than 150 people attended, enjoyed the wit and humor of The Second City, and ate a dinner that was prepared by the Illinois Institute of Art's Culinary Arts students using primarily

organic ingredients donated by Whole Foods Market. For more information on HSC's annual benefit, e-mail Cheryl Kaplan at cheryl@healthyschoolscampaign.org. To read more about this year's event and find out who sponsored it, visit www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/laughing-matters.htm.

Keeping Child Nutrition on Track

On March 15, HSC hosted "Obesity, Hunger and School Food:

Strengthening the Child Nutrition Act" in Naperville.

Community members, health professionals, and school administrators gathered to learn how

reauthorizing this critical child nutrition program would impact these issues. US Representative Judy Biggert attended to listen and provide feedback on the bill, which passed out of her committee a week earlier.



The legislation has passed through both the full House and the Senate committees as of May 19. The full Senate will vote on the bill in the coming weeks. A well-conceived reauthorization bill will help reduce hunger, improve child nutrition and health, reduce obesity, enhance school readiness, and improve achievement in school. For more information, contact Camille Reid at camille@healthyschoolscampaign.org.

Reaching the PTA and Others

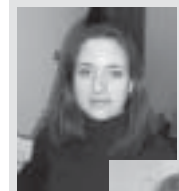
At this year's Illinois PTA Convention in Peoria, HSC presented workshops on green cleaning and obesity prevention for delegates from across the state. Fact sheets and brochures about HSC were also available at the HSC exhibit booth. If you would like HSC to speak at your next meeting or convention, or would like free copies of HSC materials to distribute, contact Louella Hung at louella@healthyschoolscampaign.org.

Welcome our new summer interns!

Anna Mason just completed her sophomore year at Vassar College where she studies French and Art History. This is her second summer working at HSC. After this internship, Anna plans to live in Paris for a year in order to continue her studies.

Kathleen King just completed her first year of studies at Trinity College (Hartford, Conn.). She will enter Brown University (Providence, R.I.) as a sophomore transfer student in the fall of 2004, where she will continue to pursue her undergraduate degree in Community Health and Public Policy. Kathleen resides in Elmhurst, Illinois, and is a graduate of York Community High School.

If you are interested in being an intern for the Healthy Schools Campaign, contact Mark Bishop at mark@healthyschoolscampaign.org.



Healthy Schools Campaign In the Spotlight

Dr. Janice Spears,
Superintendent,
Fulton County
CUSD #3

Building a Healthy School, With Enthusiasm

When building a new school, how does one make a decision to take that extra step to make it a healthy and high-performing school? For Dr. Janice Spears, Superintendent of Fulton County CUSD #3, it was an easy decision. "We realized we needed a new school building when I came to Cuba in 1999, but the decision to build green came from a series of events, starting with my initial research on healthier building."



Dr. Spears heard about grants available through the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and contacted them to see what would apply to a school building in Cuba. What she ended up with was a full presentation by DCEO to the Cuba school board about programs DCEO has to help build green schools. Armed with this information, the school board then sent Dr. Spears on a mission to find the technology and funding for a healthy and high performing school.

This led to another school board presentation by an architect who specializes in high performing schools, as well as a seed grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) to create a healthy and high performing school design plan. The school board was energized and Dr. Spears led the way.

Dr. Spears explored many healthy and green technologies. The Cuba School District ended up with a new school that will be more than just a place for classrooms, but also a school that will be a community meeting center, an interactive teaching tool and will reduce long-term operating expenses. "We envision our school as a living laboratory, and we plan to integrate energy savings, monitoring, and other green design concepts into our operations and curriculum."

For more information, visit www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/resources.htm.



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