



## EPA Indoor Air Quality TFS Program

The *Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools (TfS)* Program was developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce exposures to indoor environmental contaminants in schools through the voluntary adoption of sound indoor air quality management practices.

The *IAQ Tools for Schools* Program is a comprehensive resource to help schools maintain a healthy environment in school buildings by identifying, correcting, and preventing IAQ problems. Poor indoor air quality can impact the comfort and health of students and staff, which, in turn, can affect concentration, attendance, and student performance. In addition, if schools fail to respond promptly to poor IAQ, students and staff are at an increased risk of short-term health problems, such as fatigue and nausea, as well as long-term problems like asthma.

In Connecticut, a consortium of 24 agencies and organizations have formed the Connecticut School Indoor Environment Resource Team (CSIERT). This group assists schools with the implementation of the TfS program throughout the state.

Since 2000, TfS has been implemented in hundreds of schools across the state. School districts that have implemented *TfS* find that there are common elements to successfully implementing the program.

1. **Organizing** a team with a committed group of individuals dedicated to ensuring good IAQ and with clear support from senior management
2. **Assessing** current IAQ conditions and issues
3. **Creating a Plan** outlining a strategic approach to identifying, resolving, and preventing IAQ problems
4. **Taking Actions** to improve IAQ in the school that lead to increased student and staff health and productivity
5. **Evaluating** the IAQ management program by tracking and assessing results
6. **Communicating** the intent, results, and next steps of the IAQ management program

The *TfS* Program provides materials and guidance at no cost to help schools implement an indoor air quality management program. In addition to the [IAQ TfS Action Kit](#), specialized fact sheets, brochures, and software programs are available to provide in-depth information on environmental topics.

In Connecticut, CSIERT provides a two part, five hour TfS implementation training to the TfS team members in school districts. Each school within a school district forms a five member team that consists of a teacher, nurse, administrator, custodian, and parent.

The trainings are done free of charge by trained environmental health professionals. The first training includes basic IAQ information and the importance of good IAQ for schools as well as the steps for successful implementation. Each school team completes checklists and compiles the data. At the second training the team learns how to conduct a building IAQ walkthrough. The teams then conduct a walkthrough at their school and combine this data with the checklist data to identify problem areas.

A report is produced that provides recommendations and establishes priorities for the school administration and board of education. The next step is to act on the recommendations. The TfS program emphasizes low or no cost solutions to indoor air issues. Many small changes can often make a big difference in air quality.

#### Outcomes

Successful TfS programs have seen marked reductions in the number of visits to the school nurse, a decrease in school absenteeism (students and staff), and improved health outcomes. The program also helps to open the lines of communication between staff, teachers, administrators and parents.

More information about TfS can be found on the web at [www.epa.gov/iaq](http://www.epa.gov/iaq) or on the CSIERT web site: <http://www.csiert.tfsiaq.com/index.html>.

To arrange for a training, contact the Connecticut Department of Public Health at 860 – 509-7742 or [kenny.foscue@ct.gov](mailto:kenny.foscue@ct.gov); [joan.simpson@ct.gov](mailto:joan.simpson@ct.gov)).