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THE E.H.T. * NEWS

*(Environmental Health Team)

May, 2010 Co-Editors: Ellen Green & Rob Bliss Vol.2, Issue 2

An Editor's Note:

This is a short update and fact sheet from your EHT, edited by myself, President of the Rutland Education Association, and Rob Bliss, Assistant Superintendent of Schools. If you have any questions you'd like answered in this format, please send them to your EHT Building Rep or to Mr. Bliss. -Ellen Green

From the Chair:

Jen Pew and I attended the EPA Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools National Symposium in Washington, DC from January 12-16. The first day was a Pre-Symposium Conference held at NEA National Headquarters. This was a great opportunity to gather with association members from across the country and gave us an excellent introduction to the entire Symposium.

There were approximately 550 attendees at the symposium, including teachers, paraeducators, school administrators, maintenance directors, custodians, and health care workers. We were engaged in a Problem-Based Learning in which we worked in teams to come up with solutions for actual schools. Jen and I both worked on solutions for the Philadelphia School District. We were applying information on topics ranging from radon gas to green cleaning products that we were gaining throughout conference. We ended by presenting our solutions to members of the Philadelphia School District. This problem solving process emphasized the importance of a collaborative approach.

Hearing EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson speak was a highlight of the 3 ½ day experience.

--Deb Dauphinais

RMS NEWS:

RMS will be undergoing a major improvement this summer. The entire building will be closed while the heating and ventilation system are completely replaced. In addition, all interior wood doors will be refinished, lockers will be moved, and painting will be done.

RMS will also be the first building in RPS to have an electronic control system installed. Personal access cards will be issued to all staff, eliminating all exterior door keys. This allows for a more secure building for students and staff. As budget constraints allow, this system will be installed in all schools.

Recycling:

John Rice reported that RPS will begin a new recycling program through Casella Waste Management. A new "No Sort" Recycling program will be implemented, beginning with RMS and RIS.

This system will allow all recyclable materials to be put into one single container, and these will be separated at Casella's facility. Mr. Rice toured the Casella facility, and was very impressed with the efficiency of the operation. The issue of recycling has been a recurring



theme for the EHT, and we are excited that RPS is moving in this positive direction.

http://t2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:JByi_Maudrk39M:http://greenhats.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/recycle-logo.jpg

National Healthy Schools Day

April 26 is National Healthy Schools Day, but at RPS, it's more like National Healthy Schools week, and it is being observed in a variety of ways. The information from the website has been distributed to all REA

members. NE and NW have encouraged their staff members to use this opportunity to reinforce and promote healthy practices that will improve the learning environment. At RIS, daily announcements are being made during this week, offering informative tips for students and staff. Parents, there is information for you, too. Here's the website:

www.healthyschools.org .

http://www.healthyschools.org/images/logo_hsn.jpg

Environmental Health Team Building Walk-throughs

A thorough walk-through was done in each building that houses students at some point this year. Walk-through teams (EHT building rep, administrator, school nurse, John Rice ó RPS Director of Buildings and Grounds)

assess air quality, moisture and humidity, heating and ventilation systems, cleanliness, and reports of any concerns from staff in the buildings. This spring a "walkthrough-lite" will occur. The EHT building rep will ask for staff input and visually inspect rooms for cleanliness, safety, and HVAC efficacy. The EHT



building rep will let his or her colleagues know when to expect the walkthrough.

This one does not require students to be present to assess CO² levels, so the walkthrough does not have to be during class time.

http://www.toons4biz.com/v/vspfiles/photos/globe_earth_cartoon_01P019.jpg

From the EPA website: How does Indoor Air Quality impact student health and academic performance?

Recent research suggests that a school's physical environment also can play a major role in academic performance. Leaky roofs; problems with heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, known as HVAC systems; insufficient cleaning or excessive use of cleaning chemicals; and other maintenance issues can trigger a host of health problems — including asthma and allergies — that increase absenteeism and reduce academic performance. Research links key environmental factors to health outcomes and students' ability to perform. Improvements in school environmental quality can enhance academic performance, as well as teacher and staff productivity and retention.

Editor's note: While school indoor air quality is proven to affect student and staff well-being and productivity, so does home indoor air quality. Asthma triggers, such as pet dander, dust, mold, smoke, and other allergens, can lead to an attack at school that may not be recognized as having started at home. Check out the EPA website www.epa.gov or the CDC's asthma page <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/> for how to deal with asthma triggers in the home.

Also, RPS has been using "green" cleaners for years.

**HEALTHY SCHOOLS MAKE FOR A
BETTER EDUCATION**