



# GREEN CLEAN SCHOOLS

A national partnership to green America's schools

Green Clean Schools

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## SUCCESS STORIES

**Below are green clean successes encountered each step of the way. What's your success story? [Tell us here.](#)**

### Lancaster Schools Battle Cross Contamination with Touch-free Towel Dispensers

It's a scenario that is repeated thousands of times every day in schools across the country: germs are transferred from one student to another when they touch a common surface such as a door handle, desktop or the hand towel dispenser in the washroom.

At Lancaster Central School District in Lancaster, New York, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Dennis Weist, has found an effective tool in the battle to keep his 6,000 students from sharing germs. Three years ago, Weist replaced his district's crank-style hand towel dispensers with the Tork® Matic, SCA Tissue's touch-free towel dispensing system. Designed for high-traffic restrooms where hygiene and efficiency are important, the Tork Matic delivers one towel at a time so users do not touch anything but their own towel. As a result, cross contamination is virtually eliminated.

Weist said that his district installed more than 600 of the dispensers in eight school buildings, the administrative building, the bus garage and the maintenance shop. "Since then," he said, "I've had a lot of positive feedback from many of the teachers and also the school nurses about the way this system works. They really like the hands-free way you just grab a towel and pull without touching the dispenser."

Improved hygiene was an important consideration in making the switch but cost, maintenance and environmental issues also played a role. Crank-style dispensers invited overuse of paper supplies and caused maintenance problems when large wads of paper towels were discarded in the toilets, Weist said.

The controlled usage features of the Tork Matic have greatly reduced the amount of paper used and discarded, which has both environmental and fiscal advantages.

"Since switching, I've cut at least a third from the amount of hand towels I buy. That's good for my budget and for the environment because that means a lot less paper being thrown away," Weist said. "Now we're shooting for savings of half."

The Tork Matic also has an automatic paper feeding mechanism that makes the dispenser easy to load and saves maintenance staff time. A 700-foot-roll capacity further cuts maintenance costs by reducing the need for roll changes.

Green Team Leader SCA Tissue, one of the three largest producers of Away From Home tissue products in North America, is known for its innovative, hygienic and cost-saving Tork towels, tissues and dispensing systems.

An industry leader in environmental stewardship, SCA Tissue was the first North American tissue manufacturer to earn EcoLogoM certification. The company also is an active member of the U.S. Green Building Council and many of its products can contribute toward the earning of LEED-EB points. SCA, the Swedish-based \$13.8 billion parent company of SCA Tissue, was recently ranked as the second greenest company on the planet. More information is available at [www.scatissue.com](http://www.scatissue.com).

### School District Improves Indoor Air Quality, Makes Smooth Transition to Green

When the state mandated deadline to clean green came for New York schools in September of 2006, one school district was ready. Years before, the Locust Valley Central School District in Locust Valley, New York, had begun purchasing equipment that

would help improve the overall indoor air quality in the district's seven buildings.

Henry Alilionis, the director of school facilities and operations for the district, went on the search for a vacuum that would effectively capture the fine dust that can trigger asthma, allergies and other illnesses.

"We used all different types of equipment, from dust mops to inefficient upright vacuums," said Alilionis. "They just weren't cutting it."

Dust complaints at Locust Valley were minor but frequent, because the staff wasn't always able to do minor tasks like clean tight corners, wipe down window ledges, and clear dust off computer screens or bookshelves.

Alilionis chose a vacuum system that offered four separate filters to capture fine dust and the potentially harmful particles that can attach to it, including residue from cleaning chemicals, decaying organic matter, dust mites, bacteria, fungi, viruses and other contaminants.

"These vacuums were the ideal dust removal tool," Alilionis said. "Soon after we started using them, we could see the very fine dirt and dust wasn't being left behind. Our indoor air quality has improved, there's no doubt about it."

After switching over to the new vacuums, the filter maintenance for the air handling systems in the district dropped by 20 to 40 percent.

The Carpet and Rug Institute offers a Green Label certification for vacuums that meet set standards for soil removal and dust retention.

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### **Green Cleaning at Wisconsin's First "Green and Healthy" School**

*This success story comes from Pat Meyer, director of buildings and grounds for the Unified School District of DePere in DePere, WI.*

Our district is composed of five schools with a makeup of about 3,500 students. We implemented HEPA vacuums five years ago after a construction project to promote better indoor air quality. We have also implemented district wide microfiber use in our schools.

The benefits, while better at some schools than others, have been realized. The schools where we use microfiber technology almost exclusively have realized quicker completion of tasks and less chemical usage and have found creative ways to use microfiber to complete tasks daily that were being completed only weekly with our old method.

Our staff, while hesitant at first, have embraced the ideas of green cleaning. We are currently continuing to minimize our chemical inventory, implementing green certified products as our recognition of opportunities increases.

Our high school has implemented other high performance strategies; our department worked with the educational staff and students and our high school and was awarded the honor of being Wisconsin's first "Green and Healthy School" as recognized by the Department of Natural Resources' **Green and Healthy Schools program**.

These strategies work and you feel good about helping to contribute in your small way to an issue that is important to all of us.

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### **Jones College Prep's Environmental Hero**

When Dan Cassasanto, chief engineer at Chicago's **Jones College Prep High School**, heard about green cleaning, he decided it was worth investigating.

Cassasanto started using the plant-derived multi-use cleaner H2Organge from Green Team Supporter EnvirOx and found it to be just as effective and affordable as traditional cleaners. He replaced five traditional chemical products with H2Orange and is now incorporating other elements of green cleaning, such as scrubbers from Green Team Member Tennant Company.

"It's totally environmentally safe," Cassasanto said. "It's fantastic and it's very easy to use -- I love the simplicity about it. And it smells great."

He added that his school has seen "huge savings on the chemicals" since switching to green cleaning and that he expects to see additional cost savings as more schools go green and this drives down product costs overall.

Jones College Prep served as the sparkling-clean backdrop for Lt. Governor Pat Quinn's February 2007 press conference announcing legislation that would require green cleaning in Illinois schools.

Quinn called Cassasanto an "environmental hero" and lauded the Healthy Schools Campaign's work to promote green cleaning through legislation and the Quick & Easy Guide to Green Cleaning in Schools.

State Rep. Karen May (D-Highland Park), who sponsored the **Green Clean Schools Act** in the Illinois House, said that she liked to "break it down to the real basics. A: It's accessible. B: It's better, better for health. C: It's cost effective."

May compared the current shift toward green cleaning to earlier efforts to protect children's health.

"Years ago, we had the wisdom to ban lead-based paints because of its potential to impair a child's mental abilities," she said, adding that green cleaning is "the next logical step toward making sure that our children grow up in a healthy environment."

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### Switching to Green Cleaning Products

**The Center for a New American Dream**, with the City of Portland Office of Sustainable Development, conducted a comparison study of various graffiti removal products. They concluded that the inherent hazard of graffiti removal products varied considerably.

However, the effectiveness of the product is not related to the inherent hazard. Many of the less hazardous graffiti removal products performed as well as, or better, than the most hazardous products.

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### Choosing Green Equipment and Supplies

**The San Francisco Unified School District** implemented a program that included purchasing HEPA filtered vacuums, new mopping systems and entry mats. Prior to the project, these schools received numerous complaints of respiratory problems as well as requests for periodic deep cleaning. Since the project was initiated no such complaints or requests have been received.

Part of the success of the program was due to the training of the custodial staff. In addition to being given mops and other equipment for use in their own homes, staff were trained on Indoor Air Quality. Upon completion of the training the staff felt a level of professionalism and were able to put their knowledge to use in their own homes.

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### Cost-Effectiveness of Green Products

In 2003-2004, a Healthy Schools Campaign-led pilot project introduced green cleaning in the **Chicago Public Schools**. The price of Green Seal products was found to be cost-competitive with traditional products.

In addition, the study found that not only were green cleaning products readily available, they also performed as well if not better than the conventional products.

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### Evaluating Outcomes from Green Cleaning

**Lockport Township High School**, in Lockport, Ill., reported a 3 percent increase in the average daily attendance after the first year of implementing an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Management plan that included green cleaning.

The green cleaning program consisted of switching to Green Seal certified products, using disinfecting wipes, and changing to vacuums equipped with HEPA filters. The IAQ program included switching to high quality ventilation system filters and monitoring the carbon dioxide levels.

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### Adopting Green Cleaning Policies

New York State has been in the forefront of green cleaning. State law now requires all schools, both public and private, to make the move to green cleaning. "Guidelines and Specifications for the Procurement and Use of Environmentally Sensitive Cleaning and Maintenance Products for All Public and Nonpublic Elementary Secondary Schools in New York State" can be found [here](#).

[Read more about New York's transition to green cleaning »](#)

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