



Saugus Union School District

**Healthy Schools 101:
Getting Started with the
IAQ TfS Program**



SUSD Background Information

- District Location: Santa Clarita, CA
- District Type: suburban
- Student Population: 11,000
- Number of Facilities: 16
- Facility Age Range: 44 Years
- Total Facility Square Footage: 961,000
- IAQ TfS Excellence Winner 2000
- IAQ TfS Model of Sustained Excellence 2006



The Way We Were:
Blissfully Ignorant of Indoor Air Quality Issues

- No existing plan to address IAQ
 - "If it's not broken, why fix it?"
- No scientific or practical understanding of IAQ issues
 - Schools are here to educate...isn't that enough?

Until...

February 1999



- Local physician stated that student was suffering from “Environmental Poisoning”
- Staff and community reaction: DISTRUST or DISBELIEF

Stormy Months

- Concern explodes
- Parents organize to mount class-action lawsuit
- Staff file claims against district
- Intense media scrutiny



Finding our “Sea Legs”

- Simultaneous implementation of EPA’s *IAQ TFS* in all district facilities
- Environmental testing to look for toxins
- SUSD requests assistance from California Department of Health Services and other experts

**Defining Moment #1:
How Do We Make Sure
Everyone Participates?**

- *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools* adopted into Environmental Safety Policy
- Ensures uniformity throughout the district
- IAQ program operates under the auspices of the Safety & Risk Management Dept.
- *IAQ TfS* program becomes standard operating procedure

**Defining Moment #2:
Redefining “Clean”**

- Paradigm shift in maintenance practices
 - HVAC filters changed five times per year
 - HEPA vacuums purchased
 - MSDS reviewed; harmful products eliminated
 - Air flow measured in every classroom
 - IAQ Service Request forms created
 - Retraining of all maintenance personnel

**Defining Moment #3:
What Do We Do About Our Public
Relations Crisis?**

- Parents join problem-solving process
- District staff in-serviced and become part of problem-solving process
- Communication framework created
- Full disclosure of all inspection and test results
- Follow-up on work orders

Making IAQ TfS Work for Us

- Gain thorough understanding of district operations
- Initially, use everything in IAQ TfS Action Kit
- Customize Teacher's Checklist to save paper
- Create meaningful HVAC PM forms



#1 Lesson Learned



- Being proactive is infinitely more desirable than being reactive.
- Bottom line: Put an IAQ program in place and run it!

#2 Lesson Learned

- Open, honest and consistent communication is the key to maintaining credibility and gaining trust.



#3 Lesson Learned

- Maintain your momentum
- Institutionalize IAQ program so it can survive personnel changes
- Make it your new routine



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