

*New year, new challenges! We're here to help. Our goal of keeping children healthy, safe, and learning requires us to consider many factors. This issue of Healthy School News aims to assist by providing you quick access to some practical resources. Please share with staff, parents, and networks. To view online or access past issues, go to <https://www.epa.gov/children/healthy-schools-news-pacific-northwest>.*

## When to clean, when to disinfect



Ordinary routine cleaning with soap and water lowers the risk of spreading COVID-19 by removing germs and dirt from surfaces. In most situations, normal cleaning is enough to reduce risk. Use disinfectants on high-touch surfaces when you know or suspect someone is sick. Disinfectants are powerful tools for controlling the spread of disease, but they can harm

kids' health if used or stored incorrectly. Learn more at a glance: [US EPA - Cleaning and Disinfecting Best Practices During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)



## Healthy indoor environments in schools

Find a collection of links to [resources and guidance from federal agencies](#) about indoor air considerations for schools reopening during COVID-19 – all in one place! The webpage also provides 'Tools for Schools' resources to help create, maintain, and improve healthy indoor learning environments beyond the pandemic.

## On-demand: Webinar on ventilation

Watch now: Ventilation and COVID-19 in Schools: Using a Framework to Assess, Prioritize, and Plan for HVAC Upgrades and IAQ Improvements. [View the webinar](#) to hear about one district's experience making and carrying out a plan to improve indoor air quality in their schools. You will learn how to create an IAQ plan and program for your school or school district.



## January is Radon Awareness Month

Radon is a dangerous, radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. High levels have been found in a number of homes and schools across the country. Find out if a potential problem could exist in your building. Testing for radon is simple and relatively inexpensive. EPA has [published guidance that is available free to schools](#) throughout the country. View more information [here](#).

## Got mold? Control moisture

The key to mold control is moisture control. If there is a mold problem in your school, clean up the mold, and eliminate sources of moisture. Mold can affect indoor air quality and health. [Learn more](#).

## School resources in Spanish

Aprenda acerca de como establecer y mejorar los ambientes escolares sanos. [View information](#) about healthy schools in Spanish.



## Nominate teachers, students for environmental awards

Do you know any talented and dedicated students or teachers making a difference for a cleaner environment in your community? Nominate them for the [President's Environmental Youth Award](#) or the [Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators](#)! Nominations are due February 18, 2022.

## EPA awards funds for drinking water testing at tribal schools and childcares



Under its [Voluntary Lead Testing in Schools and Child Care grant program](#), EPA is providing about \$4.3 million to participating tribes and tribal consortia nationwide. In the Northwest, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and the Portland Area Indian Health Board are [receiving funding](#). These grants support the creation or expansion of programs to test for lead in drinking water at schools and child-care programs in tribal communities and states. Lead is particularly dangerous to children because their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults. Also, their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead.

## Schools as clean air and cooling centers

EPA is working with Multnomah County in Oregon and Kittitas County in Washington on the [Schools as Community Cleaner Air and Cooling Centers](#) program. The aim is to create cleaner air and neighborhood cooling refuges in vulnerable communities. This program, with funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, will help these select schools create an action plan to retrofit their heating, ventilation, and cooling systems. Lessons learned may inform similar approaches in other school buildings or public facilities.

Goals include:

- Improving ventilation and filtration systems in public school facilities to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and other airborne illnesses.
- Creating healthy learning environments through improved indoor air quality in schools.
- Keeping schools open in the face of more frequent and severe extreme heat and wildfire smoke events.
- Establishing cleaner air shelters and cooling centers in areas known to have more residents susceptible to serious health impacts from extreme heat and wildfire smoke.

Healthy School NEWS is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10. Region 10 includes the states of Washington, Idaho, Alaska and Oregon and the tribes within those boundaries. For general information about school environmental health or to provide feedback on this newsletter, please contact Andrea Lindsay at [lindsay.andrea@epa.gov](mailto:lindsay.andrea@epa.gov).

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## YOUR EPA CHILDREN'S HEALTH TEAM

**Andrea Lindsay**

Healthy Schools Coordinator  
[lindsay.andrea@epa.gov](mailto:lindsay.andrea@epa.gov)  
206-553-1896

**Bryan Fiedorczyk**

Children's Environmental Health Coordinator  
[fiedorczyk.bryan@epa.gov](mailto:fiedorczyk.bryan@epa.gov)  
206-553-0506

**Gretchen Stewart**

SEE - Children's Environmental Health & Healthy Schools  
[stewart.gretchen@epa.gov](mailto:stewart.gretchen@epa.gov)  
206-553-0527