

## Cleaning for Asthma-Safe Schools (CLASS)

### Background and Purpose



One in five Californians spends their day in school. Custodians have high rates of work-related asthma, while 17% of the state's children have been diagnosed with the disease.

Cleaning products are used in schools and other workplaces. They can cause or worsen asthma and release unsafe chemicals into the air.

California's Work-Related Asthma Prevention Program (WRAPP) has found that one in ten work-related asthma cases were caused by exposure to cleaning products. Some workers who got asthma from cleaning products performed cleaning tasks as part of their job, but many more reported symptoms just from being around while cleaning products were used at work. Most had no asthma symptoms before the exposure.

WRAPP created the Cleaning for Asthma-Safe Schools (CLASS) Project to help California schools adopt safer cleaning methods to protect worker and student health from asthma.

### Activities

- Partnering with California school districts to provide technical support for switching to asthma-safer cleaning products and practices;
- Creating and distributing educational materials about safer cleaning methods and products;
- Raising awareness about the importance of cleaning for asthma-safe schools via newsletter articles, webinars, and presentations.

### Asthma-Safe School Cleaning Guidelines

CLASS is developing guidelines to help all interested school districts launch green asthma-safer cleaning programs, and is partnering with school districts to pilot-test them. CLASS began working on the guidelines during a joint pilot project with the Green Schools Initiative in the 2009-2010 school year.

The guidelines describe the cost savings and benefits of switching to greener, healthier products. They also outline the key steps necessary for school districts to transition to asthma-safer cleaning, with a focus on asthma and workers. Finally, they highlight resources, such as a list of common ingredients in cleaning products that can cause asthma, and sample newsletters for schools to use.