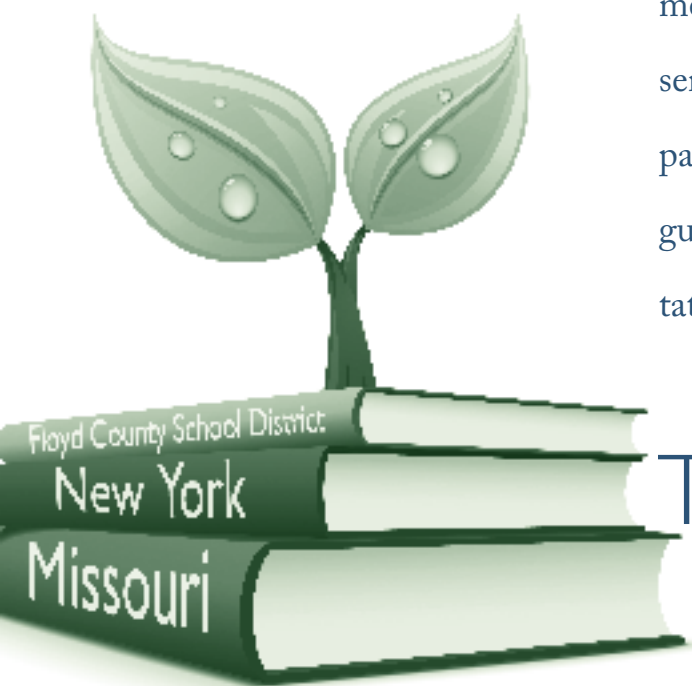


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Missouri Case Study

In 2008, Missouri passed legislation requiring state education officials to convene a committee of stakeholders with the purpose of developing green cleaning guidelines and specifications for schools. The guide, published by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), is titled “Green Cleaning Guidelines and Specifications for Schools” and was formally adopted by the Missouri State Board of Education in January 2009.

In general, the Missouri guidelines provide a comprehensive approach to green cleaning, including recommendations related to the purchase of “environmentally sensitive” cleaning and maintenance products, janitorial paper supplies, and cleaning equipment. In addition the guidelines set forth specific best practices for implementation of a green cleaning program.



Three Case Studies in **Green Cleaning**

When Gov. Matt Blunt signed into law the act requiring DESE to establish green cleaning guidelines, Mike Jones, assistant director of Custodial Services for the Columbia Public School District did not know whether the guidelines would be mandatory or voluntary—but he knew the guidelines would mean substantial changes for his custodial program that serves nearly 17,000 students in 34 buildings.

Jones heard the new guidelines would be based on the guidelines for green cleaning in schools that had recently been developed in Illinois, so he obtained a copy of the Illinois guidelines and met with his supervisor to discuss what changes they would need to make to their cleaning program in order to meet such guidelines. In the meeting, Jones and his supervisor made the decision to begin testing products and programs that met the criteria of the Illinois green cleaning guidelines in order to identify products and procedures that worked in their school district and met their needs. Jones recognized the health benefits of green cleaning and made a commitment to move toward green cleaning in order to benefit the students, teachers, and staff of Columbia Public Schools.

“When the guidelines were actually published in January 2009, this is when we hit the switch and began to implement our green cleaning program. We used the Missouri Guidelines as our road map to develop our green bids for paper, soap, chemicals, and other products and used our ‘green’ vendor New System to help us with new green cleaning procedures. We would not have moved toward a

green program if Missouri had not passed the original law in 2008 and the following guidelines in 2009,” said Jones.

In January 2009, the Columbia Public School District’s Custodial Services Department officially adopted the Missouri Green Cleaning Guidelines and Specifications for Schools in an effort to facilitate a healthier environment for students, employees, and visitors. Jones and his team began by replacing existing non-green paper towels, tissues, and soap dispensers with products that met the Missouri guidelines. Within a year, Jones and his staff had reduced the number of cleaning and floor products used from 33 to 9, simplified training, and introduced new green cleaning programs to eliminate excess waste of chemicals.

While it is too early for Jones to project the total savings from his green cleaning program, he estimates a 15 percent or more reduction in the overall cost of his program. For example, by replacing antiquated soap dispensers and non-green paper towel and tissue products with new dispensers and green products, Jones saved \$20,000 a year in paper products and \$8,000 a year in soap.

In addition, Jones communicates with his custodial staff, the school board, and school staff to make sure everyone understands the district’s green cleaning program, health, and environmental benefits. Jones actively engages the following key stakeholder groups in the district’s green cleaning program in an effort to build support for the program and educate the school community about the importance of a healthy school environment.

Custodial Staff

According to Jones, “Custodians are the ultimate users of the products and it is critical to get their support before you move forward with your program.”

Currently, he estimates that more than 85 percent of his janitorial staff is on board with green cleaning and he hopes to increase this number. To involve custodians in the green cleaning program at Columbia Public School District, Jones included them in testing new products and he values the feedback they provide about what products will and will not work in the buildings where they work.

Jones regularly seeks out their input and provides regular training to building staff. Since the green cleaning program began, custodians in the district have reported they feel cleaning has been simplified and that they have noticed improvements in their own health.

District School Board

Six months after starting the green cleaning program in Columbia, Jones was invited to speak to the district’s school board about the initiative. Jones reported that since starting the new program, the district recorded lower rates of student absenteeism, and he told the board he believes the green cleaning program is largely responsible for this.

In addition to reporting on the health benefits of the program, Jones provided the board with documentation showing that green cleaning was saving the district money. The school board applauded Jones and his team members for their efforts

and has been highly supportive of his efforts to build the existing green cleaning program.

Students and Staff

After starting the green cleaning program, Jones met with the district's teachers to explain new products and the overall goals of a green cleaning program. During these meetings, he emphasized the importance of hand washing.

"With the installation of new green paper towels, tissue, and soap, I met with teaching staff to explain our new products and stressed the importance of proper hand washing techniques. We also spoke with teachers about sharing this information with students and discussing with students the importance of being environmentally responsible."

Jones also regularly provides information to principals and teachers about new products and tips for keeping the school environment healthy and green.

"By supporting the Missouri DESE's recommended guidelines, we made amazing progress toward environmentally sensitive products and programs," Jones said.

law requiring all public and private elementary and secondary schools to purchase and use environmentally sensitive (green) cleaning products for facility maintenance. The New York State Office of General Services, in partnership with the Departments of Education, Health, Labor, and Environmental Conservation, were given the responsibility of executing and overseeing the Green Cleaning Law.

The East Meadow Union Free School District, one of the largest school systems on Long Island, began working to bring its cleaning program into compliance with the state law. Since beginning its program, the district has stepped into a leadership role, serving as a role model to other districts across the nation that are developing green cleaning programs. Director of Facilities and Operations Pat Pizzo has been instrumental in the success of the program and has successfully engaged the entire school community in the district's green cleaning program.

"It's been a multi-step process and the law got us started," Pizzo said. "We used the state guidelines and specifications as a way of establishing a baseline across the district. Once we were meeting the minimum requirements, we started looking at individual products and identifying products that we could introduce that would be better for costs, for health, and for the environment. If you're going to do something, why not excel."

Healthier School Environment

The program established at East Meadow illustrates the role a green cleaning program can play in supporting a healthy school environ-

ment while fostering environmental stewardship among school stakeholders. Schools play a prominent role in the life of the community and the policies on campus can generate extensive community dialogue. When schools adopt sustainability initiatives such as energy efficiency and green cleaning programs, they do more than save resources and protect children's health—they stimulate community-wide discussion about these issues. Because of the important role schools play in generating this dialogue, stakeholders such as parents, principals, teachers, and students should understand why green cleaning is beneficial and be engaged in the development and implementation of the program.

The result of this inclusion at East Meadow is that the school board and all the stakeholders are beginning to recognize the important role the green cleaning program plays in protecting the school community's health and consider the safety and well-being of students and staff to be of the utmost priority.

While health is now the main priority of the green cleaning program at East Meadow, initially it was only one of the factors considered in converting to a greener program. "The financial aspect was what really got me interested," Pizzo said. "Initially, a healthier school environment was the effect of our cleaning program, but not the only consideration. We've come to see green cleaning as a win-win for cost savings and the health of our students and staff."

The district is also conscientious about its obligation to be fiscally responsible while ensuring the safety and well-being of students and staff.

2 New York Case Study

In 2005, New York became the first state in the country to pass a

The use of products and equipment that reduce or eliminate the need for expensive and potentially harmful cleaning chemicals has enabled the district to realize substantial savings while simultaneously reducing its impact on the environment.

Pizzo emphasizes that green cleaning programs are not only safe and effective, but can save money:

“A comprehensive approach to green cleaning can achieve cost savings, while maintaining a safe and clean environment,” he said. “The efficient use of green products and equipment that reduces or eliminates the need for cleaning chemicals, has enabled our district to realize substantial savings while simultaneously reducing its impact on the environment and children’s health.”

Engaging the School Community

The Facilities Department at East Meadow invites input from school stakeholders, including custodial staff, administrators, teachers, parents and students. Pizzo meets regularly with all head custodians in the district and the facilities department and also meets regularly with the district’s green cleaning committee and PTA representatives at district safety committee meetings.

These regularly scheduled meetings allow Pizzo to collect comprehensive and ongoing feedback about the district’s green cleaning program. For example, when the account clerk in the Facilities Office suggested the district could save money by switching to higher-quality toilet paper and paper towels constructed from recycled materials along with dispensers designed to reduce waste, Pizzo made

cost comparisons and invited a vendor to demonstrate the products to the cleaning committee and head custodians. Soon after, dispensers were installed throughout the district at no charge. Feedback from custodians indicated less waste and cleaner bathrooms as a result.

In addition, when a staff member suggested purchasing recyclable batteries, the district’s green cleaning committee tested the batteries and ran a cost comparison—and the district is now in the process of replacing batteries with the new recyclable batteries. Return of batteries for recycling is included in the cost of the green batteries via pre-paid shipping boxes.

To engage school stakeholders in the implementation of the district’s green cleaning program, Pizzo developed a spreadsheet that includes a list of green cleaning products that are acceptable for use in classrooms and where to buy each product. This spreadsheet, which is sent to parents and teachers in the district, reduces the likelihood that parents and teachers will bring cleaning products into the classroom that do not comply with the district’s green cleaning program.

Teachers and parents have been extremely receptive of this information, and Pizzo’s efforts have helped build support among teachers for the green cleaning program. Pizzo also meets once a month with district principals to discuss strategies for developing additional buy-in for the green cleaning program among school staff and identify any issues with the green cleaning program.

The idea of sharing responsibility for the cleanliness of buildings is an alien concept in most schools. Custodians tend to take the brunt of criticism for environmental problems. It is important to communicate with administrators, staff, teachers, students, visitors, and vendors about green cleaning and to educate them about their role in maintaining environmental improvements and preventing future problems.

Recognizing its responsibility to educate students to be global citizens, East Meadow integrates conservation of resources and preservation of a healthy environment into all areas of the curriculum. The Facilities Department does its share in supporting education by supplying a variety of posters designed to remind students of the importance of proper hand washing to maintain personal health and prevent the spread of diseases. The Facilities Department works closely with teachers and administrators to provide information and resources pertinent to health and safety issues. The inclusion of students in the management of the recycling program has encouraged increased participation by all, ensuring success of the district’s recycling efforts.

Next Steps

Pizzo and a green cleaning committee took numerous steps to expand East Meadow’s green cleaning program and explore areas for improvement and growth. For example, the district replaced all petrochemical cleaning products with green-certified bio-based products, discontinued the use of regular dust mops, replacing them with microfiber

mops, and switched to hands-free soap dispensers.

Evaluation of the district's green cleaning program is comprehensive and ongoing. Regardless of cost, the district will discontinue using any product that does not meet the high cleaning standards of the district. The Facilities Department maintains a database of all products used in the district, and the green cleaning committee continually assesses the effectiveness of all new products. Head custodians are invited to discuss any issues they have with products at monthly meetings.

While the district has made great strides in providing a safe and healthy environment for its students and teachers, Pizzo is not satisfied with the status quo. Through the collaborative efforts of administration, custodial staff, vendors, teachers, students, and parents, he hopes to continue exploring new options for simultaneously maintaining a healthy, clean environment for all, while minimizing the impact on the environment.

"We're very proud of our program, but we can still do a better job promoting student and staff health and protecting the environment."

By promoting environmental stewardship across the school community, each stakeholder is more likely to take personal responsibility not just for the school environment, but for the global environment. Adopting recycling throughout the school, buying recycled paper and plastic, conserving water and energy, and using environmentally preferable (green) cleaning chemicals are among the many opportunities a school has to be more green.

"Through cooperation, a sense of ownership for the program has been developed," Pizzo said. "Purchasing decisions are discussed collaboratively with the district's green cleaning committee. Our green cleaning team, composed of custodians from several buildings, researches various green cleaning products and methods

before making its recommendations. Green cleaning topics and ideas are frequently discussed at head custodian meetings, vendors are welcomed to demonstrate equipment and products, and head custodians are invited to 'pilot' new products and methods in their buildings."

3

Floyd County School District Case Study

CIMS-GB Certification Helps Floyd County School District Demonstrate Leadership in Sustainability

When school districts take the lead in driving sustainability, they set an example for the children and communities they serve. This is why Floyd County Schools, a 21-school district based in Rome, Georgia, uses its sustainability initiatives to not only operate more efficiently and sustainably, but also to educate students about the impact building operations have on the environment.

This education has proven immensely valuable. For years, the district's landscaping and recycling programs, as well as other sustainability projects, have been successful both in reducing the district's environmental impact and in teaching children how to be environmental stewards in school and at home.

With these successes to fall back on, the district turned its attention to "greening" its cleaning operations. Yet, such a move involved much more than a simple switch to environmentally preferable products. Instead, the organization chose to take a holistic, comprehensive approach to green cleaning by pursuing certification to ISSA's Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) Green Building (GB).

The district appreciated the fact that CIMS-GB does not focus exclusively on green building criteria, but rather, includes a foundation of effective management. (The Standard is built around five principles of management best practices: quality systems; service delivery; human resources; health, safety and environmental stewardship; and management commitment. For more information, see "Existing and Emerging Third Party Certification Programs" on page 18.) Floyd County Schools recognized

that CIMS and CIMS-GB provided the perfect framework for high-quality, customer-centered service.

“CIMS is a progressive standard,” said Dr. Bob Puckett, Floyd County Schools’ deputy superintendent. “[Pursuing CIMS-GB] showed that we were willing to look at better ways to do things—for the school, for the cleaning operation, and for the students.”

Recognizing the need for consistency and improvement across the entire cleaning operation, district officials relied on the principles embedded in CIMS-GB to increase safety, reduce operations costs, and provide consistently superior results. Ultimately, Floyd County Schools proved to be a true leader in the sustainability movement by becoming the first K-12 public school system in the United States to earn CIMS-GB certification.

Gearing Up for CIMS-GB

Floyd County Schools started the process to become CIMS-GB certified by working with its longtime product supplier, Roman Chemical Corp., to analyze the cleaning chemicals traditionally being used in the schools. Ultimately, the district settled on just three environmentally preferable cleaning products, making sure the selected products could be dispensed using systems that deliver the precise amount of solution for a specific cleaning task, thereby helping to eliminate improper mixing and product overuse. Reducing the total number of products in the schools’ inventory decreased safety risks, increased cleaning consistency and efficiency, and reduced overall supply costs.

The reduction in supply costs, in turn, allowed the district to consolidate products, helping the district deal with the ongoing challenge of limited budgets. In fact, even with the purchase of new products and dispensing systems, Floyd County has seen a total savings of 10 to 12 percent on its annual product supply budget.

The simplified product portfolio also allowed for the organization to refine and standardize its training process for cleaning workers. Custodians in all 21 schools now follow the same standardized task procedures, working from job cards that describe each cleaning task and outline a schedule for each worker. The task card system was developed with the help of Jim Chittom of Roman Chemical and fits perfectly with the district’s work-loading software, which defines tasks based on building schematics, square footage, and the number of full-time custodial workers. Chittom, a CIMS certified ISSA Certification Expert—or I.C.E., was also instrumental in helping Floyd County Schools develop its CIMS-GB manual and training programs.

To meet CIMS-GB’s training requirements, the district implemented health and safety training programs for all employees. The training programs focus on hazardous material spill containment and response as well as other worker safety programs. The district also updated all its material safety data sheets (MSDS), posting updated MSDS in janitor’s closets, principals’ offices, and clinics.

Compliance with CIMS’ five management principles was achieved by taking a collaborative approach within the district—involving all

departments, from maintenance and human resources to administration and top management.


“Everyone was involved in data gathering; CIMS affects everything in the school system,” Puckett said. “But everyone, including all the principals, embraced CIMS-GB from the very start.”

Just the Beginning

Since achieving CIMS-GB certification, Puckett said he definitely sees positive results.

“Prior to CIMS-GB, some schools were cleaner than others,” he said. “I’ve definitely noticed an improvement in cleanliness. Also, morale among our 75 custodial employees has improved. They take a little more pride in their schools.”

Other school district superintendents are noticing, too. In fact, already there are other districts in the area hoping to follow in Floyd County Schools’ footsteps by pursuing CIMS-GB certification. But living up to the standard set by Floyd County will not be easy. Those who have been involved in the transformation believe the district is just getting started, and see CIMS-GB as driving improvement in other areas of the school.

“The achievement of CIMS-GB is just a starting point,” Chittom said. “Once organizations get certified, they’re not done. But under the Standard, everything is in order and in place to make a difference...to focus on continuous improvement. It’s like the beginning of the rest of your life, and it’s only to going to get better.” 

—Compiled by the Healthy Schools Network