

# News



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## **State Agencies Encourage Connecticut School Districts to Promote Healthy School Environments**

*Two School District Staff Persons Honored for their Work*

**Hartford** - In recognition of National Healthy Schools Day on Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> 2017, the State is encouraging Connecticut school districts to take steps to promote healthy environments in Connecticut schools.

Connecticut law requires every school district to adopt and implement an indoor air quality program that provides for the maintenance and improvement of the indoor air quality of its facilities. School districts are also required to implement a green cleaning products program for cleaning and maintaining school buildings and facilities.

“Indoor environmental quality impacts students’ health and ability to learn. Fortunately, Connecticut has a number of important school indoor environmental quality laws and programs to protect the health of school children and staff,” said Dr. Raul Pino, Commissioner of the Department of Public Health (DPH). “Our Tools for Schools program helps schools comply with these laws, and focuses on many low-cost or no-cost solutions which address factors that contribute to poor indoor air quality, such as air pollutants or poor ventilation.”

A consortium of 23 agencies and organizations in Connecticut formed the Connecticut School Indoor Environment Resource Team (CSIERT) in 1999. This group, with leadership from DPH, assists schools and school districts with implementing and sustaining the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) IAQ Tools for Schools (TfS) program throughout the state.

The TfS program is a team-based strategy to improving IAQ in school buildings. A building-based team of administrators, teachers, maintenance staff, parents, and others investigates and prioritizes indoor air hazards to develop short and long-term strategies to solve IAQ problems. DPH, along with its CSIERT partners, provides comprehensive training for these teams. Since 2000, TfS has been implemented in over 950 schools across the state.

Each year CSIERT chooses a “Connecticut IAQ Tools for Schools Hero” for their work promoting and coordinating the TfS program. This year, CSIERT is honoring two school district staff persons who coordinate their TfS Program - **JoAnn Duncan**, TfS Coordinator, Westport Schools; and **Aleris Echevarria** with the Hartford Schools Office of Operations for the Hartford school district. By presenting these awards, CSIERT is showcasing the value of assigning dedicated staff to coordinate TfS and to work with the building teams to ensure problems are addressed.

Ms. Duncan and Ms. Echevarria will be honored at a ceremony on April 4<sup>th</sup> at the Classical Magnet School, 85 Woodland St in Hartford, CT.

For more information about Connecticut’s Healthy School Environments program, go to [www.ct.gov/dph/schools](http://www.ct.gov/dph/schools).