

# Improving Kids' Environment

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To: Indiana School Air Quality Panel

From: Thomas G. Neltner, JD, CHMM  
Executive Director

Date: August 31, 2004

Subject: Panel Responsibilities

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to serve on this important panel. Your work will improve kids' environment.

More than two years ago, the Indiana General Assembly unanimously enacted the law that created the School Air Quality Panel. The law was effective on July 1, 2002.

IC 20-10.1-33-3(f) establishes the responsibilities of the panel. It states that the panel shall:

- (1) Identify and make available to schools best operating practices for indoor air quality in schools; and
- (2) Assist the state department of health in developing plans to improve air quality conditions found in inspections by ISDH.

In response to a public records request, ISDH provided copies of more than 100 indoor air quality inspections it conducted in 20 schools in 2002. Attached is a report IKE prepared summarizing those inspections.

IKE is concerned that the minutes from the Panel's January meeting stated that:

*"Mr. Ruyack reminded the group that they are an 'advisory' body only. The panel may make recommendations to the ISDH and those recommendations would be worked into legislation if necessary to assist in the elimination of these problems."*

This guidance contradicts the statute that directs the Panel to identify and make available best operating practices to schools. While IC 20-10.1-33-3(d) gives ISDH the discretion to convene the Panel, IKE believes the Panel has critical work to complete that is overdue and asks that it meet at least quarterly to make best operating practices available to schools.

IKE believes that the Panel should begin its deliberations with four outstanding documents:

1. *School Indoor Air Quality: Best Management Practices Manual* by the Washington State Department of Health's Office of Environmental Health and Safety. The manual was first published in 1995 and was revised in November 2003. It is time-tested and recently updated. IKE has provided each Panel member with a copy of the manual.
2. *Standard 62-2001 – Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality* by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE) and approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The standard specifies minimum ventilation rates for indoor air quality that will be acceptable to human occupants and are intended to minimize the potential for adverse health effects.
3. *Application Guide – Indoor Air Quality Standards of Performance* by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE). This guide provides an informational framework to aid in the development of standards of performance for heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, and refrigeration equipment, plumbing systems, and building envelope systems in relationship to maintaining good indoor air quality.
4. *Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools Kit* by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Radiation and Indoor Air. The toolkit shows schools how to carry out a practical plan of action to improve indoor air problems at little or no cost using straightforward activities and in-house staff.

IKE also serves on the Indiana Joint Asthma Council (INJAC). INJAC's Environmental Quality Committee developed the following goals and objectives related to schools.

***Goal 2. Reduce environmental risk factors that contribute to the asthma burden in Indiana schools.***

- Objective 1. By June 2008, revise the Indiana Sanitary Schoolhouse Rule (Schoolhouse Rule) to address environmental risk factors for asthma in the location, construction, management, or renovation and repair of school buildings or facilities.*
- Objective 2. By January 2009, increase by 20% the number of schools with the capacity to identify environmental risk factors for asthma and the knowledge to reduce environmental risk factors in school buildings or facilities.*
- Objective 3. By January 2009, integrate environmental risk factors for asthma into voluntary and regulatory codes that affect schools.*
- Objective 4. By January 2009, all superintendents as part of the school asthma management program for each school district will verify and document to ISDH on an annual basis the environmental risk factors in individual schools*
- Objective 5. By January 2009, increase by 20% state and local government capacity to identify and reduce environmental risk factors for asthma in schools.*

A copy of the specific strategies is attached.

The Panel should consider these goals and objectives and provide comment to INJAC and the Environmental Quality Committee. It is critical that INJAC's work be closely coordinated with the Indiana School Air Quality's work.

Finally, to fulfill the mandate of IC 20-10.1-33-3(f) (2) to assist ISDH in developing plans to improve air quality conditions found in inspections by ISDH, IKE recommends that the Panel receive summaries of the inspections as well as an update on the actual changes implemented at the schools and the benefits realized from those changes.

In summary, IKE is asking the Panel to:

1. Meet at least quarterly;
2. Build on the existing work to quickly provide to school leadership with the Panel's best operating practices for indoor air quality in schools;
3. Coordinate work with INJAC's Environmental Quality Committee; and
4. Ask ISDH to provide regular summaries of the results of its inspections.

Thanks for all you are doing to improve kids' environment!