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Harnessing Marketplace Power to Improve Health, Environment and Economics

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New Free Resource for School Districts to Improve Student Health and Performance!

Madison, Wisconsin. School districts throughout the US now have a free training tool to ensure all school staff – custodians, maintenance, food service, teachers, grounds staff and more – understand how they can reduce pest problems and asthma, and boost student and staff performance, as they go about their daily tasks.

Did you know that exposure to mice, cockroaches, dust mites and pesticides can trigger asthma attacks? Increasing awareness of the pest connection to asthma is one of the key goals of the free training. Asthma is the number one reason why children miss school, and attendance is one of the most critical contributors to student success!

Due to their behavior and biology, school-aged children are particularly susceptible to exposure to pests and pesticides. *The Pest Defense for Health Schools* offers free, on-line professional development to address this challenge. School districts are using the program for new staff training as well as ongoing continuing education. Users describe the program as “informative” and “very helpful.” A typical response: “Thank you for the information presented clearly and concisely. It was great information.”

The Pest Defense, formerly *Stop School Pests*, is focused on preventing pest problems including head lice, bed bugs, mice, cockroaches and ants. Simply ensuring all exterior doors have well-maintained door sweeps that seal the gap between the bottom of the door and the sill can reduce pest complaints by 65%! Everyone working in schools has an important role to play.

To learn more or to sponsor an in-person training, please contact Julian Cooper, jcooper@ipminstitute.org. Visit pestdefenseforhealthyschools.com to view the training. The training was developed with support from the US EPA and the USDA North Central Region IPM Center, and with contributions from experts in the National School IPM Working Group.

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