



Parent Power Kit: What the 2025 State of Environmental Health in PA Schools Report Means for Your School

Many Pennsylvania schools face aging infrastructure, poor air quality, and inconsistent environmental testing. The 2025 State of Environmental Health in PA Schools report outlines these challenges. This toolkit equips parents to ask informed questions and advocate for safer conditions.



Why It Matters

- Children spend over 1,000 hours each year in school buildings.
- Poor air, water contamination, and building disrepair can harm health and learning.
- Lead, radon, mold, and pesticides *are linked to developmental, respiratory, and academic impacts.*
- Most schools don't regularly test for these hazards or share results with families.

What PA Schools Are Required to Do: Lead in Water

- Act 39 of 2018 (Lead in Water)
- Schools are encouraged — but not required — to test annually.
- If they don't test, they must discuss the issue in a public meeting.
- If lead exceeds 15 ppb: exposure must be prevented, safe water alternatives provided, and results reported to the state.

Act 35 of 2002 (Integrated Pest Management - IPM)

- Schools must follow a written IPM plan focused on prevention.
- Parents must receive 72-hour advance notice before pesticide use.
- Schools must maintain a parent registry for such notices.

WHE recommends remediation for results over 5 ppb.



WHE School Health + Parent Action Checklists

These checklists are designed to help families assess school conditions and take action and are based on findings from WHE's 2025 State of Environmental Health in PA Schools Report to support healthier learning environments across Pennsylvania.

Use the **School Health Checklist** to identify potential issues, and the **Parent Action Checklist** to ask questions and engage with your school or district.

School Health Checklist

Use this to evaluate school conditions. You don't need to be an expert—just ask and note what you learn.

Find Out What's Happening

- Ask if your school has tested for radon in the last 5 years
- Request lead testing results for water fountains and sinks
- Ask whether green cleaning supplies are used
- Look for anti-idling signs at pick-up/drop-off zones
- Confirm if a school nurse is present full-time
- Are classrooms equipped with working ventilation or air purifiers?

Ask For Information & Policy

- Request a copy of the school's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan
- Ask if the HVAC system has been inspected or serviced this year
- Are test results posted on a public dashboard or website?
- Are parents notified before pesticides are used indoors or near play areas?

Get Involved

- Share this toolkit with your PTA or parent group
- Speak at a school board meeting using the sample script
- Follow WHE for monthly advocacy tips and updates



Parent Action Checklist

Monthly Advocacy Prompts

Why They Matter: These prompts are timed to align with typical school operations, seasonal facility reviews, and opportunities for public engagement. Parents can use them to start conversations with school principals, superintendents, or facilities managers—either via email or during parent meetings and public board sessions.

January: "Has the district reviewed indoor air quality issues this winter? Are HVAC filters being changed on schedule?"

February: "Are any renovation or capital improvement projects being proposed in this year's budget that relate to environmental health?"

March: "Has our HVAC system been serviced or inspected this school year?"

August: "Does the school use green-certified cleaning products? Are custodians trained on safer alternatives?"

September: "Has our school posted anti-idling signage and are drop-off zones monitored for compliance?"

October: "Are parents informed when pesticide treatments are scheduled near playgrounds or classrooms?"

April: "When were our water fountains last tested for lead? Are the results available online?"

May: "Can we review the school's Integrated Pest Management plan?"

June: "Are there any plans to test for mold, radon, or lead while school is out?"

July: "Will the school share a summary of environmental test results or facility upgrades before the new school year?"

November: "What steps is the district taking to address asthma triggers and indoor allergens before winter?"

December: "Does our district track or report absenteeism due to asthma or air quality concerns?" "Can we review the school's Integrated Pest Management plan?"

Send to your principal, superintendent, or facilities manager.

Talking Points for PTA/Board Meetings

- "This issue matters to me as a parent because my child deserves to learn in a healthy environment."
- "Data shows mold, radon, and chemical exposures are still present in many schools — but solutions exist."
- "Other districts are taking action — we can too."
- "We'd like to see a public update on environmental testing and steps the district is taking."
- "Schools are required to follow certain environmental health laws like Act 39 for lead and Act 35 for pest management. If they haven't tested, they must publicly disclose it — and we deserve to know."