

GREEN CLEANING SCHOOLS
Best Practices Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
10:15am – 11:15am on Tuesday, November 6, 2007
Chair: Becky Lockart

**** Minutes subject to subcommittee approval ****

1. Introductions (10 min.)

Eva Detloff – Illinois Association of School Nurses
Ed Grotte – Flossmoor School District 161
Lynn Hughes – Shaklee
Ruth Kutz – Shaklee
Becky Lockart – Illinois EPA
Jenn Mendez – Carpet & Rug Institute
Claris Olson – Healthy Schools Campaign
Ken Runkle – Illinois Department of Public Health
Lilliana de Santiago – Respiratory Health Association
Jim Sheffer – SIPC
Maryann Suero – U.S. EPA
Kate Tomford – Lt. Governor's Office

2. Review of objectives of the Best Practices section of the guidelines (10 min.)

Becky Lockart: The objective of this subcommittee is provide guidance to schools for following the guidelines of the act. Jim Sheffer also suggested that we could offer a tiered recognition program to schools to commend the schools that are implementing best practices. Once we get the minimum best practice recommendations hashed out, we can get into the design of a recognition program.

Kate Tomford: I also want to clarify the level of the best practices that we are including in the guidelines. Jim talked about the distinction between guiding principles and specific procedures. Our best practices need to be at the level of guiding principles that schools can apply to their own cleaning procedures. We shouldn't dictate detailed procedures for them, because those may vary by school and still be correct and effective.

Becky Lockart: Is there a minimum set of principles that we should ask schools to adopt?

Jim Sheffer: Yes, definitely – LEED-EB, New York's guidelines, and others are good examples.

Becky Lockart: Anything else in terms of subcommittee objectives?

Jim Sheffer: It's important that Illinois's guidelines are consistent with other existing programs. We don't want to contradict what has already been established as best practices elsewhere – this would be counterproductive for schools, consumers, and the industry.

Kate Tomford: We can draw from other previously written best practices, but improve on those by trying to include points that were omitted or confusing in other versions.

Jim Sheffer: Yes, we should try to be as inclusive as we can. The more we educate schools on these practices, the more likely they are to adopt them.

Becky Lockart: To recap – because some people are just joining the call – we are discussing the distinction between best practices and procedures. Some of our questions overlap with other subcommittees, too. The Product Policy group is discussing which categories of products will be required, and they are determining best practices for the non-covered categories. The Procurement group is addressing best practices for purchasing qualified products at the lowest cost.

Ed Grotte: Yes, each school purchases individually, so they all need information about this. They might not know that many of the green cleaning products are actually cheaper.

Becky Lockart: During this last round of state procurement contracts, many of the janitorial products were Green Seal certified and many were more widely known cleaning chemicals. I believe the new bid list was out at the end of 2006. I will send a copy out to the group.

3. Discussion of key components of the draft outline (10 min.)

Becky Lockart: I went through the New York guidelines, Green Seal standards, and Green Cleaning for Dummies book and included their sections in this outline. Based on comments during the last call, I also put down fact sheet topics. Is anything missing off this list? Jim had emailed to ask why mopping and sustainable floor care are separate – I'm not sure about the rationale for this, but I listed them that way because they were separated out in one of my sources. Maybe we do need to combine them.

Jim Sheffer: Yes, I think they should be combined.

Becky Lockart: I also received some emails about whether to include IPM. It has key interactions with a green cleaning policy, so it really should be included.

Jim Sheffer: I think our best practices should also include sections on purchasing and outreach. The outreach section would cover best practices for disseminating information within a school community and educating internal teachers and staff about the requirements for green cleaning.

Becky Lockart: Jim also suggested training best practices in categories with no requirements for OSHA training. Should there be a separate section on training?

Jim Sheffer: Training applies to all categories. All procedures require training.

Maryann Suero: One of the things that still needs to be included is that individual schools need to develop their own written policies and practices.

Jim Sheffer: Absolutely – this requirement appears in other similar guidelines. For example, if you're following LEED-EB, it needs to be building-specific.

Becky Lockart: Claris had also suggested a section on stewardship – we'll add that.

Ed Grotte: What about the procedures for blood borne pathogens?

Becky Lockart: Is that something schools already do in terms of training?

Jim Sheffer: I think that would fall under the Department of Public Health and their codes.

Becky Lockart: Is that something that would even be covered by green cleaning? It might be more stringent.

Eva Detloff: Yes, health codes would override green cleaning.

Jim Sheffer: Trash and recycling should be in separate categories. LEED-EB refers to trash collection and recycling and reducing solid waste. This is the strategy for the custodial department.

Ed Grotte: Should the guidelines have something about safety equipment that workers should be wearing – latex gloves, goggles?

Jim Sheffer: Maybe this should go under product policy.

Maryann Suero: Maybe we should include a section on use of personal protective equipment. We don't want to be too prescriptive, so maybe we want to include training on general use of personal protective equipment.

Jim Sheffer: We could include a statement that each school must include this in their own plan.

Maryann Suero: People will take the skeleton of the BMPs and determine their own specifics.

Ed Grotte: I think the more you include, the easier it will be for schools.

Eva Detloff: The use of personal protective equipment is definitely part of OSHA requirements and training for blood borne pathogens – possibly for disinfectants, too.

Ed Grotte: I think we should just include it in one spot.

Maryann Suero: Yes, I think it should be a separate call-out.

Claris Olson: I agree.

Jim Sheffer: Another category used by New York is on p.15, section J: investigate the use of new cleaning technologies and equipment. This is in the spirit of getting people to understand that this will be an evolving document. There is always room for improvement.

Becky Lockart: Good point – we should also include a statement list that. To summarize, we’re adding sections on personal protective equipment, schools developing their own written policies, stewardship, IPM, training, anything else?

Eva Detloff: I know I mentioned fact sheets, but the more I read, the more confusing it got. I don’t know if quick fact sheets will be enough. Just looking at our own district, we have day care, occupational therapists, very specific issues such as disinfecting mouthpieces and other specialized equipment.

Becky Lockart: Is that something they should be doing now?

Eva Detloff: Yes, they are following special procedures already now, but I’m not sure how the green cleaning guidelines would affect them.

Claris Olson: I wonder how much the Department of Health oversees this and has very prescriptive requirements about this.

Eva Detloff: Yes, I think this falls under a higher standard.

Claris Olson: I don’t think we really need to address those topics at this time. I thought the idea of fact sheet might help – for example, with teachers and how they can contribute.

Eva Detloff: Can you and I work on that together? I also learned that antibacterial soaps are forbidden in some schools.

Kate Tomford: Yes, I know that the product policy group is planning to address hand cleaners and hand soaps.

Becky Lockart: Fact sheets won’t be done till after the product policy section is done. We’re going to be doing outreach then, so we might want to wait till after we gather more questions. Before we move on, I’d also like to mention that Ed has sent me information on cleaning and disinfecting and on restrooms, and Claris has sent information on vulnerable populations and stewardship.

4. Discussion of models and sources for writing the Best Practices section (10 min.)

Becky Lockart: The sources we’ve relied on include New York’s guidelines, Green Seal, LEED-EB, Green Cleaning for Dummies, and the Healthy Schools Campaign’s Quick & Easy Guide. Based on the information I’ve seen, it seems like a good way to set this up is by room type, and then any special considerations. Any thoughts on this?

Claris Olson: When you do it by room type, it sounds like we’re getting into procedures rather than best practices.

Jim Sheffer: Our goal is to stay at the 20,000ft level, not the 500ft level. We need to lay out the purpose and principles. This will be one of the hardest sections. The state of New York has a lot of information, but the way they assimilated it was almost a question/answer format. I suggest referring to the LEED-EB organization.

Becky Lockart: Do you think that’s the way to go?

Jim Sheffer: Yes, at least it’s a good starting point, and then we can look for ways to improve.

5. Synthesis of recommendations for November 7th meeting (10 min.)

Becky Lockart: After we’re done with the call, I will take suggestions and incorporate them into the outline, then look to LEED-EB for a template.

Jim Sheffer: The SIPC came up with a way for school districts to grade themselves on how green their districts are. It was put together with help from a lot of experts, and it referenced LEED-EB and New York’s guidelines

Becky Lockart: Would this form the basis for a recognition program?

Jim Sheffer: Yes, something along those lines. We didn’t include IPM, for example – it’s just a template.

Kate Tomford: For the purposes of tomorrow's meeting, I think the outline is sufficient. It will give the whole committee a good overview of this committee's work and the issues we've identified.

Jim Sheffer: Yes, we've also identified cross-cutting issues with the other subcommittees.

6. Discussion of next steps (10 min.)

Becky Lockart: After tomorrow's meeting, will we have another call?

Kate Tomford: Let's play this by ear and schedule one if we need it. Our office will be doing the bulk of the writing over the next couple weeks, and we'll call on Council members if we need more support in certain areas.

Becky Lockart: I will forward to outline to everyone once I finish the revisions.

Ed Grotte: One more thing I wanted to mention. We bring in a risk management company that provides training. They cover right-to-know issues and MSDS – they could fill in MSDS and OSHA training.

Becky Lockart: Is the training free?

Ed Grotte: Yes, but it's part of a service that we pay for. But the training could cover MSDS and OSHA in a general session.

Jenn Mendez: I'd also like to mention that Kate has copies of the booklet from the Carpet & Rug Institute. Feel free to take information from our booklet, too. I would be happy to provide more copies if necessary.