



Energy Efficient Indoor Air Quality Assessment
A Self-Assessment Tool For Schools

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Energy Efficient Indoor Air Quality Assessment: A Self-Assessment Tool For Schools

People in the U.S. spend about 90% of their time indoors, where levels of air pollution are often two to five times higher than outdoors. Building infrastructure, high density of occupancy, and diversity of activities make the indoor air quality in schools more challenging. Poor air quality in the classroom affects how children and staff concentrate, learn, and achieve. Children's smaller lung size and more frequent breathing, along with the higher rates of respiratory infections in schools, make children susceptible to poor indoor air quality.

Assessing school buildings' strengths and opportunities for improvement is a first step to creating healthy and efficient school environments. This Energy Efficient Indoor Air Quality Assessment Form (EE IAQ Assessment Form) is designed as a helpful resource for schools in the assessment, development, and implementation of a written [EE IAQ Management Plan](#) (EE IAQ Plan). This EE IAQ Assessment Form has been informed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) IAQ Tools for Schools.

An EE IAQ Plan is a formal, written plan that outlines the policies and procedures implemented by a school or district to maintain healthy indoor air quality while also prioritizing energy efficiency. These IAQ Plans take a proactive approach to preventing and responding to issues through effective operations and maintenance practices, staff training, communications, and compliance with local and federal regulations.

This EE IAQ Assessment Form:

1. Should be completed by individuals most knowledgeable about the school facilities, which may include staff in facilities management, operations & maintenance, environmental health and safety, indoor air quality coordinators, or administrators.
2. Relates to a single physical school building.
3. Should be completed at least once per year for each building.
4. Should be used to enter work orders for necessary improvements, with findings shared with district facilities management and the school administrator.
5. Should be kept on record for at least five years and reviewed annually alongside past assessment forms to identify trends and unresolved issues.
6. Highlights each component of a comprehensive school assessment and allows the people completing to document observations.
7. Suggests practical, proven, cost-effective steps that can be taken to improve indoor air quality, manage energy use, and reduce the impact of excessive heat.

Building and Policy Assessment

|| Building Information ||

1. Date of assessment _____
2. Name _____ Title _____ Email _____
(of person completing this school building assessment)
3. School building name _____
4. NCES number _____
5. School district _____
6. School building address _____
7. What year was the school built? _____
Has the building been renovated? ☐ Yes, year _____ ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA
Have there been any building additions? ☐ Yes, year _____ ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA
8. Approximate square footage of the school building: _____
9. Number of staff _____ Number of Students _____ Number of School Nurses? _____
10. Has this school completed an indoor air quality assessment before? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA
If yes, what is the date of last assessment? _____
Please share the building's current IAQ assessment _____
11. Has this school completed an energy assessment before? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA
If yes, what is the date of last assessment? _____
Please share the building's current energy assessment _____
12. Is there a process for reporting environmental and/or air quality concerns? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

13. What types of environmental and/or air quality complaints have been received in the last 12 months? *(Select all that apply.)*

- ☐ Cleanliness ☐ Clutter ☐ Humidity ☐ Odors ☐ Pests ☐ Temperature ☐ Visible mold ☐ Water leaks
- ☐ Other *(write in)* _____ ☐ No complaints have been received.

14. Does your school or district currently have any of the following plans or policies? *(Select all that apply.)*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animals/Pets in classroom policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated pest management plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-idling policy for school buses | <input type="checkbox"/> Legionella water management plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-idling policy during school drop-off or pick-up | <input type="checkbox"/> Mold prevention and remediation plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos hazard emergency response act | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal appliances (space heaters, microwaves) policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning products policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Plant policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy management plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco and vape-free school policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmentally preferable purchasing policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Upholstered furniture in classrooms policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fragrances (air fresheners, scented products) policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire smoke management plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flood damage plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Other energy and air quality policies (write in) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous communication plan | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor air quality management plan | |

|| Ventilation and Filtration Systems ||

15. What types of HVAC system(s)/controls is/are in use in the building? *(Select all that apply.)*

- ☐ Central mechanical system with outdoor air ventilation (air handlers, rooftop units)
Is the centralized HVAC system multi-zone or single zone? _____
- ☐ Air-side economizers - a duct and damper arrangement with a control system that enables the HVAC system to use outdoor air to meet the cooling load when outdoor conditions are favorable.
- ☐ Dedicated Outdoor Air System (DOAS) - provides 100% outdoor air and manages humidity independently.
- ☐ Window air conditioning units - no outside air ventilation
- ☐ Ductless mini split heat pumps
- ☐ Classroom unit ventilators located on outside walls, capable of bringing in outside air
- ☐ Boiler

- ☐ Chiller
- ☐ Combination
- ☐ Energy recovery ventilator (ERV) or Heat recovery ventilators (HRV) system
- ☐ Other (write in) _____
- ☐ Unknown/unsure

16. Have the ventilation rates in classroom and common areas been measured in the last 1-3 years?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

If yes, how many air changes per hour? _____

17. If the building is used for other purposes after hours, does the HVAC run during these activities?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

18. When the building is not occupied during the day by students, is the HVAC system time setting adjusted to a "setback" to help reduce energy consumption?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA ☐ HVAC does not allow for a "setback setting"

19. Have any upgrades been made to the ventilation system since 2020?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

20. Who is the HVAC system serviced by?

- ☐ In-house personnel
- ☐ Service company
- ☐ Both in-house personnel and service company

21. What is the MERV rating of the filters used in the school's HVAC system?

- ☐ MERV 8 (equates to Microparticle Performance Rating/MPR of 600 or Filter Performance Rating/FPR of 5)
- ☐ MERV 11 (equates to MPR of 1000-2000 or FPR of 7)
- ☐ MERV 13 (equates to MPR of 1500-1900 or FPR of 10)
- ☐ Other? _____
- ☐ N/A

22. How often are the above filters inspected and replaced in the school's HVAC system? _____

23. Is the school using any HEPA portable air cleaners?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

If Yes:

Number of rooms equipped with air cleaners _____

Hours of operation of air cleaners: _____

How often are the air cleaner filters replaced? _____

Are the air cleaners registered (for recall notifications and warranty)? _____

|| Indoor Air Quality Monitoring ||

24. Do you have any of the following sensors or monitors to assess the indoor air quality of your building? *(Select all that apply)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Carbon dioxide	<input type="checkbox"/> Radon
<input type="checkbox"/> Carbon monoxide	<input type="checkbox"/> Temperature
<input type="checkbox"/> Humidity	<input type="checkbox"/> Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
<input type="checkbox"/> Particulate matter (PM1/PM2.5 /PM10)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other? (Write in)

25. Does your school have a Building Management System that tracks and reports data to the facilities director in real-time?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

|| Asbestos ||

26. Has your school been inspected for the presence of asbestos-containing materials?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

If yes, does your school inspect the areas with asbestos-containing materials to ensure the areas are still intact without disturbances every six months?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

|| Mercury ||

27. Are there any mercury containing science equipment onsite?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

28. Does the school have any non-LED lighting?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

29. Mercury-containing thermostats and switches were common before 2007. Older systems may have mercury in their components. Does your building have any original HVAC systems, thermostats, or electrical switches that have not been upgraded in the last 20 years?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

|| Radon ||

30. Has your school been tested for radon within the past 5 years?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

If yes, were any levels elevated?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

31. Does the school have a radon mitigation system installed?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

32. Was the school built with radon-resistant new construction?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

|| Cleaning ||

33. Are school staff/custodians trained on safe and effective handling and use of all cleaning products and equipment?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

34. Are pesticides applied inside the building or on school grounds by a licensed applicator?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

35. Does your school have an approved list of safer cleaning products (e.g. Safer Choice Program)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

36. Does your school only purchase products on this approved list of safer cleaning products?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

37. Do you use a HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) vacuum on carpeted areas?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

38. What is the hallway and classroom floor cleaning schedule for the building?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

39. If there is carpeting, how often is the carpet deep cleaned?

☐ There is no carpeting in the school building ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Annually ☐ Other _____

|| Energy Management and Excessive Heat Reduction ||

40. Is the school building's energy usage tracked using ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager or similar?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ NA

41. What strategies have been installed to reduce energy use and mitigate the impact of excessive heat on the outside of the school building?
(Select all that apply.)

- ☐ Light-colored building roof to reduce heat absorption
- ☐ Green roof with vegetation to absorb rainwater and reduce heat absorption
- ☐ Solar photovoltaic cells (i.e. solar panels) to convert sunlight into renewable energy
- ☐ Reflective window coverings to reflect sunlight and reduce heat
- ☐ Climate-specific vegetation that supports building and playground shading
- ☐ Shade structures and/or sun sails over playgrounds and/or walkways

Building Walkthrough Assessment

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
Outside Ground Level Assessment						
Outdoor pesticide applications are minimized						Adopt Integrated Pest Management practices and policies to limit the use of pesticides on school grounds.
HVAC units operate properly, including dampers, louvers, screens, filters, fans, heating, and cooling. Condensation is drained away						Change or clean filters at least annually and maintain HVAC units according to manufacturer's recommendations.
Outdoor air intakes are clear of obstructions, debris, clogs, and covers						Trim plants, remove leaves and nests to avoid obstructing the HVAC units and harboring pests. Provide outdoor air ventilation according to ASHRAE Standards or local code.
Dumpsters are located away (at least 25-50 feet) from doors, windows and outdoor air intakes						Move dumpster at least 25-50 feet away from building entrances and air intakes. Ensure dumpster lids are kept closed to avoid odor and pests.

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
Vehicles do not idle near outdoor air intakes. Local and state laws on idling should be followed.						<p>In accordance with local and state laws, implement a no idling policy for cars.</p> <p>Assess the school's idling policy for buses. Consider moving buses away from fresh air intake or having students enter and exit through a different door.</p>
Systems drain away from the building (including roof downspouts). Downspouts, gutters, leaders, and roof drains should be inspected for ponding and leaks						<p>Extend downspouts at last 4-6 feet away from the building or as local code requires.</p> <p>Eliminate standing water. Regrade to ensure water flows away from buildings.</p>
Sprinklers spray away from the building and outdoor air intakes						<p>Reposition sprinklers away from building and outdoor air intakes.</p>
Exterior walls are in good condition without signs of mold, cracks, or disrepair, (e.g. caulking between building joints, windows, and doors is intact)						<p>Repair mortar joints in brickwork OR replace missing bricks OR repair exterior.</p> <p>Assess building's interior spaces at or below affected exterior locations for evidence of water damage and repair interior.</p>

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
Exterior window and door casings are in good condition with no signs of rust						Inspect window casings for water intrusion. Repair if necessary.
Roof and Other HVAC/Air Handler Systems						
Roof in good condition with no evidence of water ponding or disrepair						Repair the roof as necessary.
Rooftop exhausts are at least 3 feet from building openings						Redirect exhaust away from rooftop air intakes and building openings.
Makeup air intakes should be placed at a sufficient distance to avoid recirculation						Redirect pollution sources away from rooftop air intakes.
Rooftop intakes should be at least 10 feet from combustion or plumbing vents						Redirect pollution sources away from rooftop air intakes.
Cooling towers should be at least 25 feet away from air intakes						Redirect pollution sources away from rooftop air intakes.
Check filters for particle accumulation and proper fit						

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
Check outside air dampers for condition and operation						
Check drain pans and coils for moisture accumulation and biological growth						
Check the condensation pump for proper operation						
Check variable frequency drive (VFDs) for proper operation						

General Building Considerations

Walk-off mats are used in all exterior entrances Mats that extend for 6 steps (15-20 feet) will trap 80% of dirt						Ensure mats extend for 6 steps (15-20 feet) at all entrances.
Walk-off mats cleaned at last annually						Ensure carpets, rugs and mats are vacuumed daily using HEPA vacuums. When wet cleaning carpets, dry within 24 hours.
Temperature maintained within acceptable ranges (generally 67-80 degrees Fahrenheit)						Set thermostat to between 67- and 75-degrees F in the winter and 73- and 80-degrees F in the summer.

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
Humidity maintained within acceptable ranges (generally 30-60%)						If humidity levels are high, increase ventilation if humidity levels outside are lower than inside. Consider using portable dehumidifiers in spaces.
Ozone sources, like 3D printers, photocopiers, and laser printers, are placed in well-ventilated rooms / serviced regularly and maintained according to manufacturer recommendations						Ensure photocopiers, 3-D printers, and laser printers are placed away from student-occupied areas and provide ventilation according to manufacturer's guidelines. Ensure equipment is serviced regularly and maintained according to manufacturer's recommendations.
No peeling or flaking paint (potential lead hazard in pre-1978 buildings)						Assess what is causing paint to peel and repair. If building was built prior to 1978, follow EPA's Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule.
No evidence of roof or plumbing leaks						Address leaks and moisture problems promptly; Dry wet areas within 24 to 48 hours.

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
Classrooms						
Minimal clutter						Declutter and dust with damp cloth.
Minimal upholstered furniture						Consider replacing with nonfabric furniture or clean weekly to minimize dirt and dust, dust mites, and bed bugs. Use a vacuum with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. Consider adopting a policy limiting what types of furniture materials teachers can bring into classrooms.
Cleaning supplies are securely stored, including science classroom chemicals						Remove cleaning supplies including disinfectant wipes and secure in a safe location away from students. Dust using a slightly damp cloth.
Supply and exhaust vents are free of obstructions						Move chairs, bookshelves, desks and other obstructions at least three feet away from unit ventilators. The tops of unit ventilators should be free from obstructions.
No unusual odors						Identify the source of the odor and address the underlying cause. Increase ventilation.

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
No signs of mold or mildew growth						Clean up mold according to EPA guidelines. Consider utilizing a professional. Address leaks and moisture problems promptly; Dry wet areas within 24 to 48 hours.
No signs of water damage or intrusion						Address leaks and moisture problems promptly; Dry wet areas within 24 to 48 hours.
No evidence of pests						Adopt Integrated Pest Management practices and policies to limit the use of pesticides on school grounds.
No food is stored in classroom overnight						Food storage is minimized and always stored in hard-sided containers.
Waste is disposed of according to local code and in timely manner						Food waste should be emptied daily.
Any class pets are contained in alignment with policy and exposure to animal allergens is minimized						Animals in the classroom should be kept in their cage as much as possible. Students with allergies should be placed away from the animals. Cages should be cleaned regularly. Consider restricting animals with fur and feathers in the classroom, as these animals can cause allergic reactions.

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
No air fragrances, deodorizers, or essential oils used						Restrict the use of air fragrances, deodorizers, or essential oils.
No unapproved cleaning products used or brought into the school						Consider adopting a list of approved cleaning products that include unscented, low-toxic products.
Rooms damp-dusted and vacuumed, using HEPA filter vacuum, regularly						Ensure carpets, rugs and mats are vacuumed daily using HEPA vacuums. When wet cleaning carpets, dry within 24 hours. Dust using a slightly damp cloth.
Science room chemicals are properly labeled and stored						Implement a hazardous materials plan (use, label, storage and disposal). Establish a school chemical management and inventory plan.
Science, art, and vocational education classrooms have local exhaust ventilation						Ensure adequate ventilation systems; install hoods that exhaust to the outside.

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
Bathrooms and General Plumbing						
Restrooms and locker rooms have operating exhaust fans						Fix any inoperable exhaust fans. Check exhaust fan on roof to ensure it is functioning properly. Repair or replace fan if necessary.
Water poured down floor drains bi-monthly or as needed						Pour about 1 qt of water down floor drains bi-monthly or as needed.
Water poured into sinks at least once/week						Pour about 1 qt of water down drains bi-monthly or as needed.
Toilets are flushed once/week						Flush toilets at least once per week.
Maintenance and Supplies						
Chemicals are used according to manufacturer's instructions, with adequate ventilation						Use a safer cleaning product, such as one listed in the Safer Choice Program. Ensure proper ventilation during use.
Vents in chemical and trash storage areas operate properly						Ensure vents are operating properly.
Unused HVAC filters are stored sealed in a box						Store unused air filters in boxes to avoid dust accumulation.

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
Combustion Appliances						
No combustion gas or fuel odors						Immediately evacuate the area and notify school officials and local authorities. Work with local authorities to determine the source of the odor and address. Ensure that combustion appliances are correctly installed, used and maintained.
Kitchen combustion and electric appliances have flues or exhaust hoods that vent to the outside						Exhaust combustion appliances to the outside and clean and maintain flues and chimneys. Ensure that combustion appliances are correctly installed, used and maintained.
No leaks, disconnections or deterioration of the exhaust components						Address any exhaust leaks, disconnections or deterioration. Replace the system if it cannot be fixed. Ensure that combustion appliances are correctly installed, used and maintained.
No soot on inside or outside of flue components						Maintain flues regularly.

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
Carbon monoxide detectors are installed and working properly						Install carbon monoxide alarms in accordance with applicable local and state laws. Test alarms at a frequency consistent with local and state laws, or at least annually.
Energy Use and Excessive Heat Readiness						
ENERGY STAR qualified or similar lighting is in place						Install ENERGY STAR, or similar, qualified LED bulbs in fixtures and exit signs.
Light fixtures are clean (to allow light through)						Dust using a slightly damp cloth.
Window shades (or reflective window coverings) are on all south and west facing windows to block excess heat						Install window shades (or reflective window coverings) on windows.
Windows and exterior doors are closed when heating/ cooling system is running						Provide staff training and education on keeping windows and doors closed when heating/cooling equipment is on.
Classrooms are free of duplicate appliances (mini-fridge, space heater, etc.)						Review staff policies regarding the use of personal home appliances. Remove or replace with ENERGY STAR labeled products.

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
ENERGY STAR qualified or similar electronics (computers, monitors, printers, and copiers) are in use						Upgrade electronics to ENERGY STAR labeled products where possible.
ENERGY STAR qualified or similar kitchen appliances are in use						Upgrade kitchen appliances to ENERGY STAR labeled products where possible.
Power save settings are activated on computers, printers, and copiers						Provide staff training and education on how to activate power save settings on computers, printers and copiers.
Rechargeable devices are unplugged once charged						Ensure rechargeable devices are unplugged once fully charged.
Refrigerators and freezers are sealed tightly when closed						Replace seals on refrigerators and/or freezers to ensure they seal tightly when closed.
Equipment is plugged into power strips for easy disconnect from power source						Install power strips for equipment.
Unused appliances are unplugged or on a power strip that is shut off						Unplug unused appliances or power off power strips.
Vending machines are turned off or put into sleep mode at end of day						Program vending machines to turn off or go into sleep mode during non-operational hours.

Item	Yes/Ok	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable	Observations	Recommendations and Follow-up
Windows and doors have adequate weather stripping						Replace weather stripping on windows and doors.
External entrance doors are not propped open						Ensure external doors are not propped open.
Lights are off in unoccupied rooms and gymnasium						Turn off lights when rooms are not occupied; consider installing motion sensors.
Motion sensors (if present) are set to short turn-off time						Program motion sensors are set to short turn-off.
Electronics are located away from thermostats						Provide staff training and education to ensure electronics are located away from thermostats.
HVAC supply pipes are insulated						Insulate HVAC supply pipes.
Ceiling fans are used in classrooms and gyms						Install and run ceiling fans in classrooms and gyms.

Reference and Resources

1. [CDC Controlling Legionella in Cooling Towers](#)
2. [Energy Efficient Indoor Air Quality Management Plan Toolkit](#)
3. [Energy Star Energy Efficiency Student Toolkit](#)
4. [Energy Star Portfolio Manager](#)
5. [Energy Star Energy Treasure Map for K-12 Schools](#)
6. [EPA Creating Healthy Indoor Air Quality at Schools](#)
7. [EPA Moisture Control, Part of IAQ Design Tools for Schools](#)
8. [EPA Model AHERA Asbestos Management Plan for Local Education Agencies](#)
9. [EPA Protecting Children from Lead Exposure in Schools and Child Care Facilities](#)
10. [EPA Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Action Kit](#)
11. [EPA Walkthrough Inspection Checklist](#)
12. [ASHRAE Standard 180 Standard Practice for Inspection and Maintenance of Commercial Building HVAC Systems](#)
13. [Minnesota Department of Health IAQ Actions for Facility Operators](#)
14. [New Hampshire Department of Education Bureau of School Safety and Facilities annual air quality survey](#)
15. [Uniform Mechanical Code \(IAPMO 1997a\)](#)
16. [University of Wisconsin Steven's Point K-12 Energy Education Program](#)
17. [Vermont Department of Health Envision School Walkthrough](#)

Thank you to our Healthy and Efficient School Environments partners for their collaboration on this tool.



Center for Green Schools
at the U.S. Green Building Council





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