

How School Environments Influence Student Experience and Performance

A supportive learning environment depends on more than classroom materials and curriculum. Better indoor air quality, ongoing facility maintenance and thoughtful budgeting all play a role in supporting student well-being and focus. Schools that prioritize indoor air quality and wellness practices can help create environments that support students and staff. Research consistently shows that healthy school environments are closely linked to student learning outcomes and overall wellbeing.[1]

Improving indoor air quality often starts with HVAC systems, but it also involves consistent facility practices and the right supplies to support daily operations.

The importance of HVAC and air quality

Indoor air quality is a key factor in maintaining a strong school environment. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems play a central role in circulating air, regulating temperature and helping reduce airborne contaminants. Guidance from public health organizations emphasizes the importance of maintaining clean indoor environments in schools to support infection prevention and student well-being.[2]

Regular HVAC maintenance helps support optimal air circulation throughout school buildings. Consistent airflow can help reduce the buildup of dust, mold and other particles that may impact respiratory health. Preventative maintenance can also help extend the life of equipment and reduce the likelihood of unexpected system failures, which can disrupt learning environments and lead to costly repairs. The Environmental Protection Agency highlights indoor air quality management as a key component of high-performance school environments.[3]

- **High-quality air filters:**
  Upgrading to high-efficiency or HEPA filters can help capture allergens, bacteria and airborne particles more effectively than standard filters. Better air quality can support improved indoor environments for students and staff.[4]
- **Improved student outcomes:**
  Research indicates that improved indoor environmental quality, including air quality, is associated with better cognitive function, attention and academic performance in students.[5]



Cleaning and sanitization strategies

In addition to indoor air quality, consistent cleaning and sanitization practices can help reduce the spread of germs and support overall wellness in schools. The CDC emphasizes layered prevention strategies, including routine cleaning and sanitization practices, to help reduce the spread of illness in school settings.[2]

- **Touchless dispensers:**
  Touchless hand soap and sanitizer systems can help minimize cross-contamination while encouraging proper hand hygiene habits among students and staff throughout the day.
- **Disinfecting wipes and surface cleaners:**
  Regular use of disinfecting products on high-touch areas such as desks, door handles and shared equipment can help reduce the spread of bacteria and viruses in school environments.
- **Odor and allergen control:**
  Maintaining well-ventilated spaces can help reduce airborne irritants and improve comfort for students and staff, supporting a more focused learning environment.

Core school supplies that support wellness

The right supplies play an important role in supporting daily school operations and broader campus preparedness efforts.[3]

- **First aid kits:**
  Provide quick access to medical supplies, helping staff respond efficiently to minor injuries and health concerns in the classroom or on campus.



- **Tissue and hand hygiene stations:**
  Support respiratory etiquette and personal care habits, helping reduce the spread of illness and encouraging daily wellness routines among students.
- **Accessible cleaning supplies:**
  Providing staff and students with easy access to cleaning tools encourages shared responsibility for supporting well-managed learning environments.

Budget-conscious solutions for healthier schools

Maintaining a strong school environment requires thoughtful planning and resource allocation. Schools can help maximize impact by prioritizing investments that support operational efficiency and student well-being.

- **Prioritize core needs:**
  Budgets need to address key priorities first, focusing on supplies that directly support student well-being, personal care and indoor air quality.
- **Long-lasting, multi-use products:**
  Durable and reusable supplies can help reduce waste and support consistent performance over time while supporting budget efficiency.
- **Supplier partnerships:**
  Partnering with trusted suppliers can help schools access cost-effective solutions and maintain high standards for quality within budget constraints.

A well-maintained facility with improved air quality and strong wellness practices can support student well-being and academic success. By prioritizing HVAC maintenance, indoor air quality and the supplies that support daily operations, schools can help create environments where students stay focused and ready to learn.

ODP Business Solutions partners with schools to deliver practical, cost-effective solutions that support stronger learning environments. From HVAC filters and cleaning products to everyday supplies, ODP provides the tools and guidance schools need to maintain well-managed, productive spaces.

[1] https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/good-health-key-student-learning
[2] https://www.cdc.gov/children-and-school-preparedness/infection-prevention/actions.html
[3] https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/indoor-air-quality-high-performance-schools
[4] https://www.lung.org/blog/healthy-classroom-air-steps
[5] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12126171

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