



Dr. Mary Ellis – Superintendent

Board of Education

John Collins - Chairman
Leslie Boyd - Vice Chairman
Michael Guzman
Sharon Harrell
Christina B. Helms
Jason Marton
Melissa Merrell
Gary Sides
Kevin Stewart

To: Principals
From: Dr. Mike Webb
Date: August 10, 2015
Subject: **Unapproved Chemicals at Schools**

During recent conversations related to proper chemical use and through recent inspections of schools, many unapproved and unnecessary chemical products were discovered. Those unapproved products found were discarded on site or removed from school for appropriate disposal.

Most of the products discovered were purchased by school administrations for classroom, office and custodial use. Others are being brought in by teachers or by children at the teacher's request, (i.e. Student Supply Lists). All of those products clearly state "KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN" on the container. Typical items cited by health inspectors in the classrooms and within reach of children include: *plug in and aerosol air fresheners, spray disinfectants, Clorox & Lysol wipes, hand sanitizers, bleach products, Windex, Ajax, white board cleaner and Goo-Gone.* These products are also coming into the school without a Safety Data Sheet (SDS), which is required by OSHA for the work place.

These types of products usually contain chemicals that are flammable, combustible and/or create respiratory and other health hazards for our students and staff. Most people really do not understand the hazards that these chemicals create because these products are common household products that are regularly purchased to use in homes. These products would not normally cause any noticeable health issues for home use since household members are not being exposed to those chemicals for 40+ hours per week.

Two guiding principles in our High Performance Cleaning Program (HPCP) include the following:

1. **Every student has the right to a safe and healthy school environment.**
Every adult is accountable and personally responsible for protecting the health and safety of students.

Globalization. Innovation. Graduation.

Every adult is expected to work collaboratively to sustain a healthy and safe environment by:

- a. Recognizing the factors that contribute to an unhealthy environment
- b. Knowing how what they do affects the environment
- c. Taking corrective actions and/or notifying appropriate personnel necessary to restore the environment to healthy standards

The Facilities Department will provide training and communicate with staff and community users to educate them on the value HPCP has on the health and academic performance of students as well as the personal and environmental benefits of a successful program.

2. **Every employee has the right to work in a healthy and safe environment.**

Workplace conditions are regularly evaluated to minimize employee/occupant exposure to harmful contaminants and cleaning residues. Systematic processes are in place to assure compliance with OSHA standards, safe operating procedures, and use of safe tools, equipment and supplies. Proper procedures, potential hazards and safety information are documented, clearly communicated to employees, and readily available for review.

By continuing to allow unapproved chemicals into the school environment, we are denying the right to a healthy and safe environment to students and staff. Please refer to the ***Hazards Related to Chemicals*** document posted on the Facilities Department webpage for more information related to the hazards of chemicals that are banned from school facilities.

Understanding that there are products that are not provided to the school that staff feels are necessary for their classrooms, departments or offices, we are providing an ***Approved Products Purchasing Guide***. The guide is only the beginning of a database being created that schools and other departments will be able to access for use as an environmentally safer purchasing guide. Only those items listed will be approved for purchase by the purchasing department. Products not on the list should not be allowed to be brought into the school by anyone.

Facilities Department webpage link for the ***Approved Products Purchasing Guide*** and the ***Hazards Related to Chemicals***:

http://fpc.ucps.k12.nc.us/custodial_services/