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Tools For Schools program sweep to collect air quality data, point out issues

Indoor Air Quality program part of joint venture with the University of Tulsa and HISD

CFS Environmental Services Manager and Tools For Schools (TFS) Program Coordinator William Cooper recently assisted in the indoor air quality inspections of 19 school campuses. This was in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the University of Tulsa Indoor Air Program.

"TFS catches poor indoor air quality early on. The goal is to increase attendance because students tend to miss school more often due to respiratory illnesses," said Cooper.



William Cooper (l) and David Reisdorph (r) collect air emissions from a class vent.

The HISD elementary schools recently tested include: Almeda, Codwell, Dailey, Ketelsen, Lantrip, Oak Forest, Park Place, Poe, Seguin, and Walnut Bend. Middle schools were: Clifton, Dowling, Ryan, and West Briar. High schools visited were: Chavez, DeBakey High School for Health, Milby, Waltrip, and Westside.

David Reisdorph, research associate for the University of Tulsa, explained that the program is vital in providing an optimum learning environment. "We look for air particles, carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, vent problems and air filtration issues," he said.

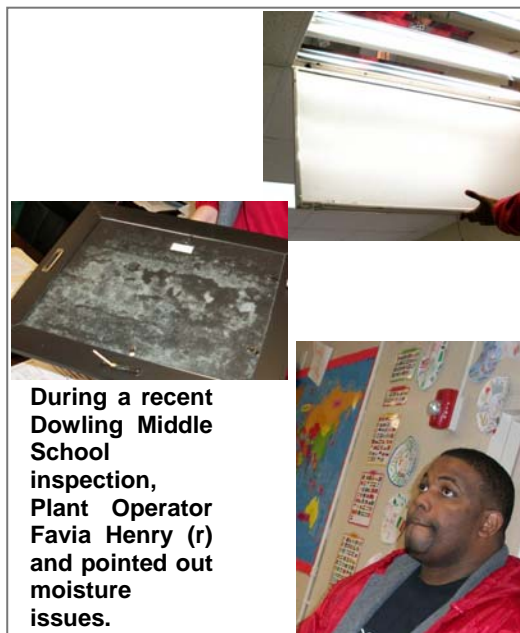
The Indoor Air Program helps school districts to assess and address air quality that is affected by commercial and organic substances.

"The most common issues are moisture build-up, carbon dioxide increases, and poor ventilation because of design standards or slow filtration scheduling," said Reisdorph.

A large amount of CO₂ is good indicator of a ventilation system not working as it should. Typical concerns found in many HISD classrooms were clutter on top of vents and the use of air fresheners to mask musky smells. These actions can actually make it easier for mold to grow in a classroom.

"The walkthroughs are supported by an EPA grant," said Cooper. "They help CFS by providing current data to establish goals and plans for short-term or long-term action."

All data collected are the district's baselines for each school. CFS will use this to *measure results and* improvements.



During a recent Dowling Middle School inspection, Plant Operator Favia Henry (r) and pointed out moisture issues.

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SOME BAD HABITS TO AVOID: (left) Dozens of classrooms were found with clutter on top of the ventilation system, restricting air flow. This makes air worse because the items on top absorb moisture and immediately attract mold. (right) Teachers are still using plug-in and aerosol air fresheners. In reality, the chemicals in these products make it more difficult for students to breathe.

There are 18 more schools are on schedule for assessment during the week of April 16th, from all across the district. The elementary schools are: Berry, DeChaumes, Herod, Horn, Lovett, Moreno, Robinson, Rodriguez and Twain. Early Childhood Centers include: Farias, Lorenzo, and Mistral. Key and Long Middle School, as well as Furr, Jordan, Kashmere, and Wheatley High Schools round out the list.

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