



HEALTHY SCHOOLS NETWORK

December 2022 News

... for children ... health ... environment ... education ... communities ... since 1995 ...

Stunning Win: 67% of NYS Voters Approve \$4.2B Environmental Bond Act

In November, 67% of New York voters approved the Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Bond Act. The act will provide over \$4B to improve the state's environment. Despite political polarization, it passed in both blue and red areas, a clear signal of support for the environment.

After HS Network successfully pressed for K-12 schools to be eligible for funding, we secured the support of educators. A thrilling result: public schools may tap bond funds for electric school buses, for renewable energy, and for increasing the resiliency of facilities.

Thank you, fellow New Yorkers, for your commitment to NY's children and the environment!



**"Climate justice is racial justice.
It is economic justice.
It is environmental justice."**



2022 Summit Report!

We issued the 2022 summit report [COVID, Climate, Children, and Schools](#) in August. It was our second conference and second report on these complex, costly topics. Both reports will inform our work in NY on the bond funding as well as our national efforts. (See the 2021 report [here](#).)

What you need to know: Education is a social determinant of health; closed schools undercut learning. Nationwide, school facilities offer over 8 billion square feet of learning space valued at over \$3 trillion. Yet schools are NOT climate ready, nor are they prepared for the next epidemic. That means more closures. Schools in low-income communities and communities of color suffer the most.

Why? Schools in these communities face grossly disproportionate funding levels and risks from recurring disasters. For them, disasters are a fiscal nightmare and a community health and mental health nightmare. Our summit reports focused on the injustice and inequity of unprepared schools. We lifted the voices of impacted communities: more than half of the summit speakers in 2022 were from BIPOC communities. Attendees also explored policies and actions for schools to prepare for and mitigate health and climate threats so they can stay open, safely,

Following up, we organized an interdisciplinary climate and health panel for the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association in Boston, featuring high-powered experts, including Joseph G. Allen, DSc (Harvard), Mark Mitchell, MD (GMU), and Joel Solomon of NEA, the nation's largest union.



**Fedrick C. Ingram, Secretary-Treasurer,
American Federation of Teachers**

[DONATE NOW](#)

Claire L. Barnett, MBA, Executive Director

Susan Goekler, PhD, Board President

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US EPA Clean Air in Schools Needs Funding

The White House handed EPA a welcome initiative in March 2022—the [Clean Air in Buildings Challenge](#). It also posted a [toolkit](#) listing existing federal programs for school infrastructure, including those in ARPA and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. For schools, ARPA supports everything; BIL targets energy, safe transportation routes, and lead in drinking water. But neither ARPA nor BIL aims to rebuild America's schools. Neither requires addressing polluted air in schools, a decades-old public health problem that causes asthma and disabilities, undercuts learning, and ups family medical bills.

Advocacy results: The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) includes preventing air pollution in schools at \$50M/ten years: a starting step. With \$110M annually, EPA could lead a national educational campaign; launch state and city planning; educate schools, personnel, parents, and communities; invest in research; and host an advisory committee on schools and child care. EPA would also be in a better position to ensure that the noble intentions of HHS, Education, and Energy promote, and do not damage, clean indoor air, clean water, and clean school facilities. Sixty-six national NGOs agree with us and signed our widely distributed letters to Congress.

What you can do: Time is short. With new House members taking office in January, these few remaining weeks are critical for more funding for EPA. Tell [US Senate Majority Leader Schumer](#) and [House Speaker Jeffries](#) to fund clean indoor air in schools, for children and staff, in both FY23 and FY24.

Federal Advisory Committee on Children and Disasters

In 2022, HS Network Executive Director Claire Barnett was seated as a voting member of the [National Advisory Committee on Children and Disasters](#). Appointed as co-chair of the work group on communities, she is lifting concerns about public health prevention. The committee will host its second public meeting on January 18, 2023. See HS Network's national documentary report *Schools of Ground Zero: Early Lessons Learned in Children's Environmental Health* and our other disaster-related publications in our [Clearinghouse](#).

Healthy Schools Network Is Hiring!

We have two open positions, both remote and part-time. Candidates should send an email to info@healthyschools.org to receive the job posting. 1. **Assistant director** (in the Washington, DC, metro area): Work with our executive and board on all aspects of our work. Candidates should have experience in state and federal policy public health, environment, journalism, or disaster preparedness. 2. **Communication support** (any location): Use your technical skills to boost our web work and social media to protect children's environmental health.



Thank you, Healthy Schools Network National Advisory Board

It's been an active period for HS Network's advisory board.* Comprising diverse fields—education, public health, environment, architecture, and more—the board held two lively Zoom meetings to share knowledge and advise HS Network. Topics included indoor air quality and other elements of healthy schools, plus recommendations on education and policy efforts. We are so grateful to have this stellar lineup of advisors. Thank you!

Tobie Bernstein, JD
Environmental Law Institute

Veronika Carella
Maryland Children's Environmental Health Coalition

Hannah Donart, MPH
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

Leslie Fields, Esq.
Sierra Club

Jon Forster, MA
Vice President, DC 37, AFSCME

Jay Herzmark, RN, MS
SafeWork Washington

Joellen Lawson
Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools

Mark A. Mitchell, MD, MPH, FACPM
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Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, Bloomberg School of Public Health

Erik D. Olson, JD
Natural Resources Defense Council

Janet A. Phoenix, MD, MPH, MS
George Washington University
Milken Institute School of Public Health,

William Potts-Datema, DrPH, MS, MCHES®, FASHA, FAAHE
National PTA

John E. Reeder, MA
Environmental Working Group

Jenna Riemenschneider, MS
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Craig Schiller, MS
Collaborative for High Performance Schools

Joel Solomon
National Education Association

Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, MPH
Children's Environmental Health Network

*Organizations identified for informational purposes only

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\$35 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$200 OTHER at Healthyschools.org/Join-Support

\$2,500 seeds a one-semester intern; \$1,000 underwrites DC travel; \$200 covers the cost of environmental health information and referral for a frustrated parent. In-kind donations of paper, printing, or travel are always appreciated. Project sponsorships and donations in honor of family are warmly welcomed. Just call us! Healthy Schools Network is a 501(c)(3) not for profit.