

For School Leadership and Facilities:

Every Renovation Is a Chance to Reduce Exposure

Schools are in a unique position to promote healthy behaviors. Most US children spend an average of 6 to 7 hours a day at school, making schools one of the environments where they spend the most time outside the home.

1

PRIORITIZE HIGH-EXPOSURE MATERIALS/SURFACES

Start where daily contact is highest and risk reduction can have the biggest impact. Focus first on the materials students and staff touch or the spaces they occupy daily – flooring, ceilings, paints, furnishings, and composite wood products. Risk reduction here can have the greatest impact.

2

REPLACE DURING ROUTINE UPDATES/CYCLES

Make healthier substitutions during scheduled replacements, repairs and renovations instead of waiting for a full make-over. Integrate healthier substitutions into scheduled repairs, repainting, and system upgrades. Incremental improvements reduce exposure without requiring large-scale overhauls.

3

DEFINE CLEAR MATERIAL HEALTH CRITERIA

Make it easier to repeat good decisions by pre-approving healthier, climate-conscious options and updating procurement standards. Establish internal standards (e.g., low-VOC, PVC-free, formaldehyde-free, ingredient disclosure thresholds) to streamline consistent decision-making.

4

BUILD CRITERIA/EMBED REQUIREMENTS INTO SPECS/SPECIFICATIONS AND BIDS

Put healthier material requirements into standard specs, bid documents, and procurement workflows so they become repeatable. For example: “Flooring must be low-VOC, PVC free...” Include health-based criteria directly in master specifications and procurement documents. Example: “Interior flooring must be...”

5

APPLY A STANDARD REVIEW LENS DURING PLANNING

When any renovation is planned/proposed, ask: Is this a high-exposure surface? Is a healthier, low-emitting alternative available? Does it meet durability and maintenance needs? Does it have transparency documents (HPD/EPD)?

6

BE AN ONGOING ADVOCATE FOR MATERIAL HEALTH

