

## A **Multi-Clean** White Paper

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**Multi-Clean**<sup>®</sup>  
Your Guide To Clean

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*Multi-Clean supports clean and healthy schools through sponsorship of the Healthy Schools Campaign.*

## ***Greening Our Schools is a ClassACT*** *Going Green on a Tight Budget*

In an era of tight budgets, there may be thoughts of placing green cleaning on the back burner. The reality is that going green should not cost more, and over the long run will cost less. The purpose of this White Paper is to provide the knowledge on how any school can 'go green' while staying on budget.

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### Introduction

The EPA has estimated that nearly 50% of our public schools have had some issues related to poor indoor air quality. Illness related absenteeism and nearly epidemic rates of asthma amongst school age children are creating a clear call to action to improve the indoor environment in schools. A big push by government and advocacy groups to get our schools to adopt green cleaning is in its early stages, with mandates in several states already signed into law.

### Problem Statement

Research reports suggest that students attending schools in poor condition score 11 percent lower on standardized tests than students who attend schools in good condition. Asthma affects one out of every 13 school-aged children and is a primary cause of school absenteeism, accounting for 14.7 million missed school days per year. Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) problems in schools persist -- the presence of mold, dust mites, cockroaches, pet dander, and certain chemicals can trigger asthma attacks and other illnesses. Inadequate cleaning processes and frequency can result in a build up of contaminants that make the indoor environment unhealthy.

Trying to figure out how to keep a facility clean with static or decreasing budgets is a big challenge for educational facilities. Tightening budgets should not be a reason to put green on hold, in fact it should provide even greater incentive to truly green the cleaning process in our public schools.

One of the purposes of this White Paper is to dispel the notion that going green is going to cost more.

### Why Do We CLEAN?

Traditional cleaning processes have always had appearance as the No. 1 goal. The Goal of Green Cleaning is decidedly different. The main objective of WHY we clean is to protect the health of building occupants. Simply stated....

**Green Cleaning is defined as Cleaning to Protect Health without Harming the Environment.**

## Solutions

This White Paper aims to provide a blueprint that shows “going green” and reducing costs can go hand in hand. But first we have to address some mindsets that have to be changed.

### *Is Clean Taken for Granted?*

The public tends to expect that facilities, especially our schools, are kept clean. Yet there remains a huge disconnect between public expectations and the cost to maintain a facility. Cleaning operations budgets remain a sacrificial lamb when the budget ax falls. Cleaning should no longer be taken for granted, for it is the health of our students and teachers that can be impacted.

### *Blame the Custodian?*

When schools are not cleaned to expectations, it’s easy to blame the custodian or those in charge of cleaning operations. Here is the harsh reality; gains in productivity have not kept up with cuts in cleaning budgets. This reality means the health and cleanliness in our schools is being compromised because there are fewer custodians to get the job done.

### *It costs too much to go green?*

The perception that it is going to cost more to go green is a misconception on the part of cleaning operations people. The myth is often propagated by some uninformed sales people and others that have not been properly trained on what green cleaning is truly about.

## Implementation

Implementing a green cleaning program in a school should be a transition process, rather than an overwhelming ‘all or nothing’ process. Start by looking for the win-win situations where savings can be achieved and staff acceptance

will be high. What follows are several ideas that are not only green, but offer potential cost savings, as well.

### ***Ban the Mop and Bucket***

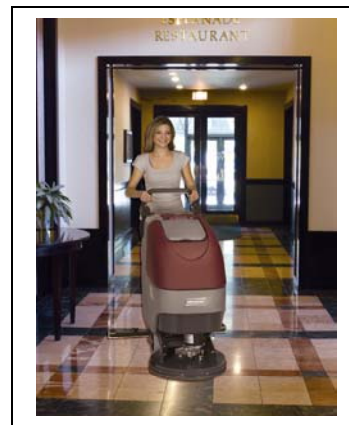
Traditional mop and bucket cleaning often amounts to moving dirt from one side of a room to another. Microfiber flat mop systems can replace the mop and bucket all while cleaning more effectively. These systems are more ergonomically friendly, so staff acceptance is high. The special microfiber cloths remove soil more effectively and

require less use of water and chemical. There are systems that use fresh cleaning solutions continuously to avoid the fruitless movement of soil around a room. The microfiber pads are easy to launder, so no more dirty, smelly mops.



### ***Use Equipment to be more Efficient***

The right equipment is a key component for helping to increase productivity of



staff. Equipment features include ergonomic controls, less noise, reduced chemical/water usage, and faster cleaning rates, all which add up to greater efficiency and being green.

### ***Go Lean and Green***

Audit your supplies and costs. Keep what you use, eliminate what you don't. A big part about going green is reducing waste. Use concentrated products to replace 'ready to use' products for products that use less packaging and more recycled content. Re-use labeled spray bottles. Increase your efforts.



### ***An Ounce of Prevention***

Poor indoor air quality often results due to a build up of contaminants in a facility. One of the most effective strategies to prevent contaminant build up is to address building entrances, where 90+% of these contaminants enter the building. The correct type and amount of walk off matting and more intensive maintenance practices in and around entrance areas can capture dirt/contaminants at the source, before they are spread throughout the building. This method of 'Source Control' is a cost effective way to keep buildings healthier and cleaner.

### ***Strip Your Floors Less***

Annually stripping of floors is a ritual in some schools. However, green cleaning practices (such as effective source control of contaminants), properly implemented may result in less frequent stripping. Chances are as you walk through a school there will be intense traffic areas that require stripping. In other areas, a proper scrub and recoat may be all that is needed. Preserving labor for other tasks, and using less chemical is easy on the budget and good for the environment.

### ***Use Chemicals the Right Way***

It is believed without measuring, the 'glug glug' method of manual dilution results in 50% waste in chemical from

overuse. Contrary to the myth, using more doesn't mean it cleans better. Green Cleaning requires that chemicals



be used efficiently. That inevitably means measuring the chemical according to instructions. Automated dispensing systems do this with little or no guesswork. The chemical gets diluted properly every time

### ***Cleaner Restrooms Faster***

A lot of time is needed to clean restrooms and it is a difficult job. The old mop bucket and spray bottle cleaning method takes time and doesn't always leave restrooms clean. Touchless Cleaning Systems use a mobile cart that automatically dilutes chemical and applies to surfaces to be cleaned through a spray gun. Touchless systems not only allow restrooms to be cleaned faster, but they are actually left cleaner than traditional cleaning methods.



### ***Keep Those Gym Floors Shiny***

Today's gym floors are often multi-use floors with few restrictions on how they are used. That means gritty dirt often finds its way onto the gym floor. Not only does the dirt scratch the finish, this contamination can make it unsafe for gym/sporting activities. First, removing

the gritty dirt from the floor is essential with regular dust mopping. Unfortunately, the traditional dust mops used in schools are good for picking up large debris, but very poor at removing the gritty dirt. Using microfiber dust mops, or new technology mops designed to capture gritty dirt is needed. To maintain a high traction surface, regular wet cleaning with an appropriate cleaner is also necessary. Use a product recommended for wood gym floors. Do not use neutral cleaners, which are not strong enough to remove oily residues that can often compromise the traction on the surface.

### **Chuck Those Aerosols**

Aerosol cleaning products are rarely needed. These products are expensive and are not good for the environment. Find ways to eliminate most aerosols and replace with liquid concentrates to produce dramatic savings.

### **Keep Those Hand Clean**

The transmission of viral and infectious agents amongst the school population can often be reduced with hand washing. Whether it is the common cold or very serious infections like MRSA, effective promotion of hand washing can reduce illnesses and absenteeism.



Today's Foaming Hand Washes are more accepted and more likely to be used than traditional liquid soaps. It is estimated that 40% less soap is needed with Foam Soaps, resulting in significant savings and environmental benefits.

Finally, in restrooms avoid the use of anti-microbial hand soaps, as these products do no better than regular hand soaps, they cost more, and can have a negative impact on the environment.

### **Summary:**

Green cleaning is a transition process that never ends. Adopting any or all of the practices outlined in this White Paper will not only help you along the green cleaning journey, but can actually produce bottom line savings to schools in an era of tight budgets.

### **Resources:**

**Multi-Clean: Company** offers a variety of products and educational tools for schools. Learn more by clicking on the link:

[www.multi-clean.com](http://www.multi-clean.com)

**Green Cleaning Website:** The website below is loaded with information and resources to make it easier to go green.

[www.yourguidetoclean.com](http://www.yourguidetoclean.com)

**Healthy Schools Campaign:** This advocacy group promotes healthier schools.

[www.greencleanschools.org](http://www.greencleanschools.org)

[www.healthyschoolscampaign.org](http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org)

**EPA Tools for Schools:** A program for schools to improve Indoor Air Quality.

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/>



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