

# ReminderNews

## Connecticut schools are now clean and green

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Students across the state will be returning to schools that are a little bit "greener" this fall, as a statewide law (Public Act No. 09-81) that was passed in 2009 requiring all schools to initiate a green cleaning program by July 1, 2011, went into effect. The act requires all school custodial staff to use cleaners that are less toxic than those commonly used in the schools previously.

The greener cleaning products are those that have been certified by an independent third-party, Green Seal ([Greenseal.org](http://Greenseal.org)) or Eco-Logo ([www.ecologo.org/en/index.asp](http://www.ecologo.org/en/index.asp)). The certified cleaning products are formulated to minimize any potential harmful effects on human health and the environment, thereby improving the health of staff and students by eliminating toxic chemicals and asthma triggers, including bleach, phenols and ammonia that are commonly found in typical cleaning products.

Greg Plunkett, director of facilities in Colchester, said the town's schools have been using the recommended green cleaning products for some time, as they were involved in some of the testing for the new products. According to Plunkett, the new products work at least as well as the previously used, less environmentally-friendly

products. In particular, products like wax strippers, which can include some fairly harsh chemicals, are much milder, but work just as well.

In addition to requiring the use of certified products, implementation of the act requires the cooperation of all school staff, and parents as well. Teachers and staff are now banned from bringing in their own cleaning products, including hand sanitizer and deodorizers. Similarly, parents are no longer allowed to send these types of products to the school with their children.

A full version of the green cleaning products law can be found at [www.cga.ct.gov/2009/ACT/Pa/pdf/2009-PA-00081-R00HB-06496-PA.pdf](http://www.cga.ct.gov/2009/ACT/Pa/pdf/2009-PA-00081-R00HB-06496-PA.pdf), while more information on the act and the cleaning products can be found at [www.pollutionfreeschools.org](http://www.pollutionfreeschools.org), [www.informinc.org](http://www.informinc.org), and [www.ct.gov/dph/ieq](http://www.ct.gov/dph/ieq).

In addition, parents can request information on the types and names of products used, as well as a schedule of where and when the products are used, from the school district administration, if the information is not available on the district web site.