Your Summer 2026 SASI Update!

Welcome to the summer 2026 edition of our Supporting America's School Infrastructure (SASI) Grant Program newsletter: The SASI Blueprint! As we continue to support schools across Pennsylvania, we remain focused on sharing timely updates, practical guidance, and key insights to help you navigate evolving requirements and priorities. Inside, you'll find important information, resources, and reminders designed to support your ongoing work and planning efforts.

For PA EdVentures & PDE Bulletin Board Subscribers: This is part of our **quarterly** SASI Blueprint. As a current subscriber, you have automatically been added to this new mailing list. If you would like to opt to unsubscribe and would **not** like to receive these communications, please click the Unsubscribe button below.

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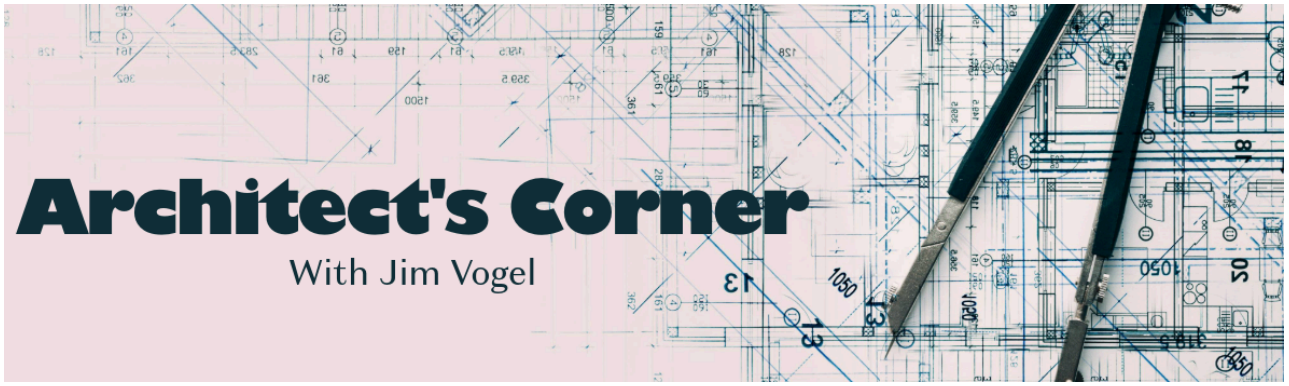


Reopening a School for the New Year: An Indoor Air Quality Checklist

HVAC & Ventilation

- **Equipment Verification**: Test all system components to ensure proper operation.
- **Filter Verification**: Inspect all filters to ensure they are properly installed, sealed, and upgraded to MERV-13 (or the highest compatible rating).
- **Belt & Motor Check**: Inspect HVAC fan belts for cracks or slack. Lubricate motor bearings to prevent failure.
- **Airflow Check**: Confirm that all room supply and return vents are unobstructed by items such as furniture, books, or posters.
- **Exhaust Fans:** Ensure restroom, kitchen, and locker room exhaust fans are fully operational and operating continuously during school hours.
- **Outdoor Air Dampers**: Verify that outside air dampers are open and set to

- **System Timing**: Program building automation systems or thermostats to run HVAC systems for at least 1-2 hours before and after building occupancy to flush out stagnant air.
- **Two-Week Flush**: Run the entire HVAC system continuously on 100% outdoor air for 14 days before occupancy.

Air Cleaning & Monitoring

- **Function Testing**: Test all monitoring equipment for proper functionality, replace batteries, and confirm emergency alert communication systems are working properly.
- **Portable HEPA Units**: If installing portable HEPA air purifiers, ensure they are placed in high-risk areas like nurse's offices, cafeterias, and older classrooms.
- **CO_2 Monitoring**: Deploy or check carbon dioxide sensors to ensure levels remain consistently below 700 parts per million above the ambient outdoor levels (key indicator of stale air).
- **Radon**: Consider testing for radon if this has not been performed in the last five years

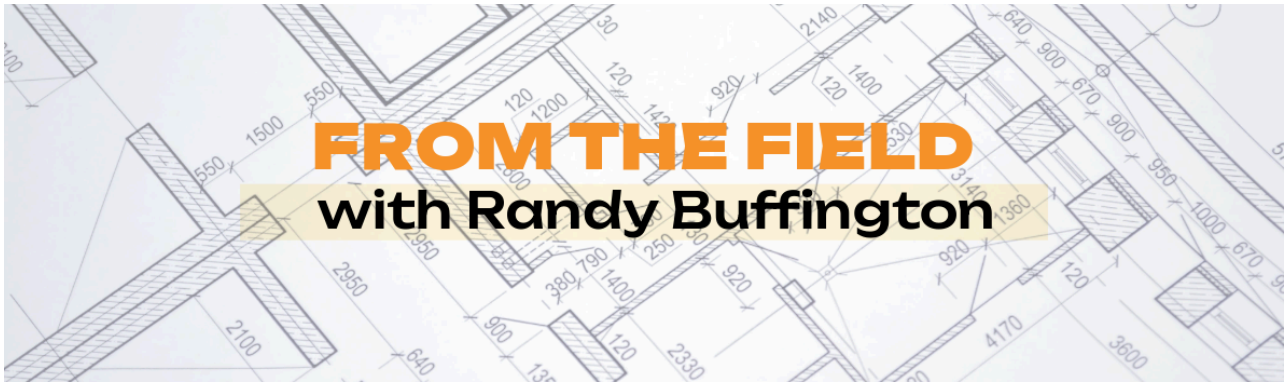
Source Control & Moisture Management

- **Mold & Water Damage**: Walk through the facility to inspect for signs of water damage, roof leaks, condensation on cold pipes and ducts, visible mold, or foul/musty odors.
- **Air Intakes**: Inspect exterior outdoor air intakes to ensure they are clear of debris and located at least 25 feet away from pollutant sources (e.g., bus idling zones, dumpsters, sewer vents).
- **Condensate Pans & Plumbing**: Flush all water systems to clear stagnant water and check that drains are clear and traps are filled.
- **P-Trap Priming**: Pour one gallon of water into every floor drain, sink, and water fountain to seal sewer gas traps.

Cleaning & Chemical Management

- **Deep Cleaning**: Thoroughly vacuum carpets using HEPA vacuums and dust surfaces to reduce accumulated particulates.
- **Chemical Inventory**: Remove or safely dispose of outdated, unnecessary, or unapproved cleaning chemicals and volatile organic compound (VOC) heavy products.
- **Green Cleaning**: Transition to Green Seal or EcoLogo certified cleaning products to reduce chemical off-gassing.

For further and more specific guidance, refer to the **Pennsylvania Department of Health Indoor Air Quality Guidelines** or explore the **US EPA IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit**.



Preparing for Back to School for School Facilities

Many schools utilize the summer to prepare their facilities for the start of a new academic year. School crews and contracted services will often summer-clean, continue on-going preventive maintenance efforts, and complete larger facilities repairs and improvements.

Utilizing the summer break is extremely important to adequately prepare for a new academic year.In order to ensure that your schools are ready for another school year, facilities leaders need to be mindful of some larger concepts including:

HVAC, Building Envelope, & Other Systems

Ensuring that schools are appropriately conditioned revolves around maintaining a good HVAC system and building envelopes. Besides heating and cooling, an essential function of the HVAC system is to control humidity within the building. The maintenance crew along with their contracted maintenance service providers need to be focused on maintaining HVAC systems. This can be completed by preventive maintenance, repairs, adjustments to building automation systems, and replacement of aged equipment, which is often completed in the summertime.

Inspecting roofs, cleaning roof drains, making needed repairs, and replacing aged roof systems are extremely important to maintain a dry interior environment. Utilizing a roof maintenance plan and completing the needed work is a key component.

Facilities leaders need to ensure that the scheduled summer work on HVAC systems, roofs, building envelopes, and other systems have been completed to ensure a comfortable indoor environment exists.

Safety

Besides providing a comfortable indoor environment, a well-maintained HVAC system also has a direct influence on maintaining good indoor air quality. Involving an environmental consultant to review conditions before school begins and periodically throughout the school year as needed is a best practice.

Facilities leaders should also be mindful of tripping hazards and should inspect walking surfaces

both indoors and out regularly and have the issues corrected. Preventive maintenance and inspection of doors and hardware should also be conducted regularly to ensure reliable systems. Summertime can provide an opportunity for replacement of walkways, thresholds, doors, and hardware.

Other equipment and systems, some required, need to be inspected including AEDs, fire safety systems, playgrounds, bleachers, stage rigging, operable partitions, and artificial turf.

Inviting

Many factors go into maintaining an inviting school building including keeping it clean. In the summertime, custodial activities often include re-finishing floors, extracting carpets, and heavy-duty cleaning.

Ensuring that painted surfaces are not marred and not peeling is important. A fresh coat

updating signage is important.

A well-maintained lighting system, both indoors and out, is also important. Grounds maintenance including mowing, weed control, and trimming trees and shrubbery is also key to establishing an inviting facility. Budgets are not endless, but a splash of color from perennials, annual flowers, and mulch can add a nice touch.

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Facilities leaders, are you ready for the 2026 - 2027 School Year?

Updates from the Office for School Climate and Well-Being

Connections Corner: A Resource for Families, School Personnel, and Community Partners

The Office for School Climate and Well-Being has created **Connections Corner** as a resource for parents and guardians, school personnel, and community partners to reach out with any questions or concerns. Learn more using the Connections Corner button!

Connections Corner

Start-of-Year SAP Reminder for Schools

As the new school year begins, SAP teams are encouraged to prepare early to support a smooth start for students and families.

- Ask parents/guardians to reconnect with the SAP team if continued support is needed.
- Schedule initial SAP team meetings prior to student return.
- Review prior-year SAP data to identify trends and needs.
- Re-establish communication with families who may seek ongoing SAP services.

Training & Resources

New SAP team members should consult the **PNSAS Training Calendar** for upcoming training dates.

PDE continues to offer funding for SAP training while funds remain available. Please see the **PDE Funded SAP Training Announcement** for details.

SAP Data Submission

Please submit your 4092 to PDE if you have not yet done so at **www.safeschools.pa.gov**.

SAP data from the previous school year will be available in October.

PA Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD)'s 2026-2027 School Safety and Mental Health Grants

The School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC) and PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) are pleased to announce the opening of the 26-27 School Safety and Mental Health grant funding solicitation for public school entities. The funding announcement is open in the

and applications are due by **October 16, 2026.** Please access the funding announcement document, Q&A details, and other resources on **PCCD's active funding announcements webpage**, under the 26-27 School Safety & Mental Health Grants.

This is a **noncompetitive**, formula-based funding announcement to provide grants to eligible school entities to support physical security enhancements and/or mental health initiatives, based on a school entity's local needs. The allocated amount of funding for each public school entity may be found in Appendix A of the **funding announcement document.**

To assist schools in guiding decisions about their behavioral health and physical security needs, the SSSC convened experts to develop and update **Baseline Criteria Standards** to organize policies, programs, activities, equipment, and trainings into a multi-leveled chart from Level 1, which are the most basic elements a school entity should have in place, to Level 3, which are the most advanced elements. The Baseline Criteria for both **Physical Security** and **Behavioral Health** were **updated in June 2026** to reflect current School Code provisions and considerations of the current school safety and behavioral health landscape for schools. School entities are strongly encouraged to review the updated **Baseline Criteria** in advance of submitting their grant application under this solicitation to determine what criteria their school entity currently meets and where additional investments may be needed. **Per 24 P.S. §13-1314.3-B, current Level 1 criteria must be satisfied prior to school entities utilizing these funds for other eligible program activities and expenses.**

Physical Security Level 1 Baseline Criteria items that are eligible uses of this grant funding include areas focusing on physical building improvements, such as vehicle barriers and/or fencing of entrances and critical areas identified in a physical security assessment; external, protective doors with viewing pane; door handles that cannot be barred; exterior doors with working locks; visitor buzz-in entry system that allows for visual observation; interior doors capable of being locked from within each room; functioning cameras in critical areas as identified in a physical security assessment; and more. Funding may also be requested for conducting a **physical security assessment** (aligned with standards adopted by the SSSC and conducted by the State Police RVAT unit or an **assessor approved by PCCD**) of all school buildings housing educational programs, under Level 1 of the Baseline Criteria.

Questions regarding the grant funding announcement, the Baseline Criteria, or physical security and behavioral health assessments may be sent to **RA-CD-SSSC@pa.gov**.

PA Department of Agriculture (PDA)'s Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in Pennsylvania Schools

Summer Stinging Insect Integrated Pest management for Schools
Donald DeMackiewicz Jr. (dxd160@psu.edu), Pennsylvania IPM Program

While many social wasps are pollinators and predators that can benefit gardens and crop production, their nests can be problematic when they occur near schools and playgrounds. When managing school grounds, consider preventive measures like keeping lids on trash cans and trapping foraging workers with yellowjacket traps.

When the location of nests is risky to students and staff, it is easier to eliminate paper and ground nests now than it will be in late August and September when nests are large, workers are protective, and students may be around. Wasps on small paper nests can be knocked down with a stream of water and squished or treated with ready-to-use aerosols by a licensed pesticide applicator.

Yellowjacket nests in the ground or wall voids are best treated with dust insecticide by licensed applicators. Working at night is safer and wearing the proper PPE is important. For more tips on protecting yourself and your students read **"Getting Rid of Paper Wasps, Yellowjackets, and Other Stinging Insects**" by **Jamie Kopco, Ph.D. BCE**, PSU Extension Educator.

PA Department of Community and Economic Development: Solar for Schools Grant Program

The **Solar for Schools Grant Program** established by Act of 68 of 2024 and administered by DCED, provides grant funding to reduce the cost of implementing solar energy systems in schools. Eligible entities include school districts, intermediate units, charter schools, a school for education of the deaf or the blind, area career and technical schools, specific trade and technical schools, and community colleges. Grantees may use funding to purchase and install equipment, permit fees, energy storage, and utility interconnection. The program will accept applications on a rolling basis until all funds are exhausted.

Contact Devin Gray at **devigray@pa.gov** with questions.

PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP): WIIN 2107 Grant Program

Voluntary School and Child Care Lead Testing & Reduction Grant Program

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has federal grant funding to help eligible public schools and public or private child care facilities address lead in drinking water. Funding may be used to purchase and install hydration stations, point-of-use devices, or replacement faucets for water fixtures used primarily for consumption or food preparation. Eligible applicants must have appropriate drinking water sample results showing an exceedance of the remediation trigger level (5 parts per billion) within 36 months of the date of their application to quality. More information is available on the **WIIN 2107: Voluntary School and Child Care Facility Lead Testing and Reduction Grant webpage**.

Operations and Maintenance Spotlight *with Harrisburg School District*

The Operations and Maintenance Spotlight is a recurring feature of the SASI newsletter that highlights practical, field-tested maintenance strategies and operational best practices from school districts across Pennsylvania. Each edition showcases proactive approaches that help extend the life of building systems, improve safety, support regulatory compliance, and create healthy, efficient learning environments for students and staff.

In this edition, we're pleased to feature preventive maintenance tips and insights from Harrisburg School District, shared by John Reedy, COA, and Craig Glass, Director of Facilities. Their experience and proven practices offer valuable ideas that can help facility teams strengthen preventive maintenance programs and enhance day-to-day operations.

At Harrisburg School District, we take preventive maintenance as high-priority tasks. We purchased a significant amount of new HVAC recently. To ensure it lasts and is always in working condition, we've implemented several strategies:

1. Our first step in preventative maintenance was to develop a complete equipment inventory that is updated as new equipment is installed.
2. We've researched the manufacture's recommendations and built the replacements needed into our Incident IQ work order system. This allows us to accurately track replacement (filters, belts, etc.).
3. Coils and filters are key in optimal performance of our HVAC systems. Coil cleaning begins in the spring to ensure functionality when cooling season begins. This is also tracked within our work order system.
4. Our opened/closed loops and cooling towers are chemically treated and tested to maintain any build up that may occur to the internal piping.
5. While changing filters in our unit ventilators, we test the unit actuators while the unit is open. We also check the valves and both inside and outside air dampers to ensure they are functioning correctly. This helps to prevent frozen pipes in the winter.
6. Because some of our boilers run all year long for dehumidification, we not only have

our boilers and handle any items we can't handle in house.
7. We also keep inventory of the motors and belts on hand should any of our exhaust systems need attention.
8. If any of our technicians need training, we work closely with the manufacturer (Example – Trane) to ensure proper knowledge of the unit.
9. Lastly, we go back through the work orders and audit to ensure the work being done is timely and done correctly.

Questions may be directed to Erin Derr, PDE School Facilities Advisor, at **jder@pa.gov** or 717-787-6016.