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**Plan your Work and Work your Plan:
Learn How to Develop a Comprehensive School IPM Program
Questions and Answers**

November 15, 2016

Plan your Work and Work your Plan: Learn How to Develop a Comprehensive School IPM Program, one of a series of [school Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\) webinars](#) hosted by EPA's Center of Expertise for School IPM, was presented on November 15, 2016. Included here is information on the presenters and responses to participants' questions.

Speakers

- Tom Greene, Ph.D., IPM Institute of North America
- Raul Rivas, Metropolitan School District of Pike Township (Indiana)
- Francine Locke, School District of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania)

Questions and Answers

These questions were posed by webinar participants. The responses may have been refined following the webinar for clarification or to include additional resources.

1. Can this IPM information be used at the college level as well?

(EPA) Absolutely. IPM is a smart, sensible and sustainable approach to controlling pests that can be used at all locations.

2. Is this webinar and the training resources in the public domain for our use in training staff?

(EPA) Yes. You can find links to recordings of this and our other webinars [on our website](#). In addition, [iSchoolPestManager](#), provides a wealth of school IPM resources, including links to training materials, that may help you in your training program.

3. If pesticide applications are needed, should they be made by contractors or by trained and licensed staff?

(Dr. Green) That will depend on the size of the school district, budget and policies. The majority of school districts (70-80% according to the IPM Institute) contract for pest management services. About 60% of school districts contract for all of their pest management services, while others use a combination of in-house and contracted services.

There are pros and cons for each. Some school districts have in-house programs that do everything except apply pesticides. They will call in their contractor to make any pesticide applications, rather than licensing and training their in-house staff and potentially increasing their liability. Other districts do everything in-house except in an unusual situation, such as a termite treatment for which their staff does not have the training or licensing. Still other districts do everything in-house.

The most important point is that it is impossible to fully contract out IPM. Because a large part of IPM is the school district's role in terms of sanitation, maintenance, food handling. IPM is really a partnership. If you are using a contractor, there are important things that both parties need to do. In addition, the school district needs to have constant contractor oversight. The facility manager and IPM coordinator need to know IPM steps so they can supervise the contractor, insure they are getting what you have contracted for, and insuring that they are getting an IPM-based service.

4. Do you know of a great sample IPM plan for county education offices?

(Mr. Rivas) Refer to the IPM plan mentioned in my resources slide. Study it, then tailor it to fit your needs. IPM consistently recommends starting with best cleaning practices. Then, you may need to contract a professional for specific pest issues. Find someone knowledgeable, or willing to learn about IPM so they are not making applications without first identifying the pest and the specific area requiring attention. Put a committee together to help implement your plan. The more people involved, the more people you will have vested and dedicated to following through on the implementation of the plan. With input from representatives of all staff groups, you will come up with a really good plan.

5. As an administrator, was it hard to get buy-in from the front line staff (custodians / kitchen helpers) when you implemented IPM?

(Ms. Locke) Getting the buy-in from the operations director, who is in charge of the facility area coordinator, who speaks to the facility engineer who then works with the cleaning staff was really important. Having this trickle down was the best way for our district to implement IPM. In terms of getting buy-in, we have a shortage of cleaning staff so asking to do more, such as daily wet mopping and cleaning up after breakfasts in the classroom, is not yet possible. Our cleaning and custodial staff do not have the resources to do everything we would like them to do, so we have challenges to overcome. But, just understanding that everyone has a part to play, including the teachers and the students, by throwing their trash away, and by cleaning up after themselves, is a key step.

6. Are your pest management costs higher since implementing IPM?

(Mr. Rivas) Implementing an IPM in our school district has been less expensive. Our approach has been to designate a member of our staff to receive training by the Indiana State Chemist at Purdue University. This includes licensing to apply a pesticide, if required. We no longer contract out for services unless it is absolutely necessary, such as for termites.

7. As an administrator, what are the best benefits you've noticed since implementing IPM?

(Mr. Rivas) We have seen our attendance and graduation rates increase. For an urban school district, our average graduation rate during the past five years has been 93% or higher.

8. Can you suggest strategies to convince teachers to get rid of the clutter and stored food in their classrooms?

(Mr. Rivas) I conduct three buildings inspections per year (fall, winter and spring). The report indicates areas of concern which are either addressed immediately by the custodian, scheduled to be resolved by the Facilities Department, or incorporated into long-term repair planning by contractors. I also consult with the principals and will even ask if I need to cite a teacher for clutter in the classroom. This helps support the principal in keeping their building clean.

9. What is the best way to determine where to invest money in our pest management program?

(Mr. Rivas) The best way to invest in your pest management program is to put funding toward staff developmental opportunities that could include webinars, web-based tutorials, and online resources.

10. Do you have an IPM checklist that we can use when inspecting our school and childcare facilities?

(Mr. Rivas) I developed an inspection form that we use in the Metropolitan School District of Pike Township and which I am willing to share.

(Center) Several checklists are also available through the [iSchoolPestManager website](#).

11. Would you suggest small, rural districts hire their own IPM coordinator if there are no local contractors that provide IPM-based services? If so, what is the best way to find an IPM coordinator or specialist?

(EPA) This is a decision that must be made on a case-by-case basis and in consideration of each district's resources. In addition, you can also choose to train an existing staff member to become your IPM coordinator or hire someone to fill that role. If you choose to hire an IPM coordinator, job descriptions from [Texas AgriLife Extension](#), [Guilford County \(Texas\) Schools](#) and [Duncanville \(Texas\) ISD](#) may help you in that process.

12. Do you have an IPM checklist for use in new construction?

(EPA) While the [iSchoolPestManager website](#) contains links to several checklists, none are specific to new construction. There are, however, checklists for building interior and exterior inspection that would be applicable. During the design and construction process, you may also want to refer to the [Pest Prevention by Design Guidelines](#).