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SCHOOL IPM COALITIONS:

Building Collaboration for More Effective Pest Management in Schools

Moving Forward with School IPM Coalitions

Coalitions create an ongoing peer-to-peer support network for school professionals and others working to reduce pest problems and pesticide use in schools. This publication is designed to provide a practical guide to starting and sustaining effective coalitions for Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Why IPM in Schools?

IPM is a proven method that provides successful management of pest problems with minimal impact on human health, the environment and non-target organisms. Children's behavior and developing systems make them especially vulnerable to pests and pesticides (National Academy Press 1993). Establishing high-level IPM programs that focus on preventing pest problems in schools can reduce both pest complaints and pesticide use by 70 to 90% (Gouge *et al.* 2006). IPM improves results, including reducing asthma risks for both students and staff by effectively addressing cockroach and rodent issues which can cause asthma and asthma attacks (Nalyanya *et al.* 2009).

Why School IPM Coalitions?

In 2002, one of the first school IPM coalitions was formed in Arizona. Led by faculty working for Indiana University and the University of Arizona, the coalition met regularly to hear from experts and share successes and challenges. Coalition members were school professionals including facility managers and school health personnel, maintenance, food service, custodial

and other staff, area pest management professionals, state agency staff and others. Within three years, 30% of all Arizona school children were benefiting from IPM.

School IPM coalitions foster efficient transfer of information, encourage collaboration, reduce duplication of effort and speed expansion of IPM in additional school districts within a region. Forming a school IPM coalition allows districts to easily share resources without having to "reinvent the wheel". The coalition provides educational opportunities, hands-on training, peer-to-peer mentorship, technical support, and program and planning support for members.



Coalition members identifying pests, one of the core principles of IPM.

What makes a successful coalition?

- ▶ Diverse group of stakeholders with common goals.
- ▶ Strong, experienced leadership.
- ▶ Adequate funding to support coordinator time and other costs.



What are My Responsibilities as a Coalition Member?

▶ Participate!

Whether you are an experienced IPM implementer or a novice, the coalition can't exist without your active participation. Typically coalitions meet quarterly or twice annually. Keeping that commitment makes it all happen.

▶ Share information

The greatest benefit from participation comes from sharing challenges and solutions. Implementing IPM means addressing both pest and people problems. No doubt others in your region can learn from you, and you from them by sharing successes and shortfalls.

▶ Recruit like-minded peers

You can be the most effective person to encourage your peers at other school districts to join the effort to make IPM the way we do pest management in all of our schools. Invite them along. Successful peer recruitment can result in the exponential growth of the coalition.

▶ Implement and improve IPM in your district

At the end of the day, putting IPM to work in your district is the key to success for all of us. Participating in the coalition can help keep you and your district at the head of the learning curve and top of your game for IPM as well as related environmental initiatives.

What Can My Coalition Accomplish?

Increase awareness of the benefits of IPM in the school professional community. IPM is a better way for all school districts to meet their pest management needs. Meeting announcements, press releases, success stories and personal invitations can all bring about greater awareness.

Persuade school professionals of the relative advantages of IPM. Coalition meetings and communications can provide data already developed as well as new information generated within the coalition documenting

fewer pest complaints, reduced pesticide use, transition to reduced-risk pesticide options and any cost savings. IPM is compatible with current objectives of school districts including facility maintenance, sanitation and energy conservation. Coalitions offer an opportunity for regions and districts to try new approaches on a limited basis, observe results first-hand and get the help they need to overcome challenges and ensure success.

Generate a commitment to make and expand change, and provide the tools that might be needed by members including district IPM policy and IPM plan templates, model IPM-based request-for-qualifications and contracts for pest management professional services, school assessment checklists and training tools. These tools are already available at http://www.ipminstitute.org/school_ipm_2015/resources.htm for coalitions to modify to meet the needs of their region and districts.

Confirmation that IPM is a winning strategy. Pre and post evaluations of pilots and demonstrations, third-party verification, recognition and awards all help provide reinforcement for a job well done. Promoting these among the broader community helps give credit where credit is due and helps make everyone aware of why IPM is worthy of their support.



Missing or damaged door sweeps provide entry for pests and dirt, and allow hot and cold air to pass through. Just installing effective sweeps to close the gap between the bottom of the door and the threshold can cut pest complaints by up to 65%, save energy costs and keep hallways cleaner.



Getting Started

Who will take the lead? Strong, committed leadership is essential. Leaders will be responsible for creating and maintaining interest and momentum, assessing needs, facilitating priority setting exercises and maximizing collaborative benefits for participants. Duties include preparing and circulating productive agendas, recruiting expertise for educational presentations and generating financial support. Leaders should have strong facilitation and project management skills, be well respected in the region and be networked with the school IPM effort in other states in the region and nationally. Effective leaders may be associated with university systems, state agencies or non-governmental organizations. Access to administrative support staff can make the leader role more manageable.

Tips for Organizing a Coalition

Quarterly meetings may be frequent enough to maintain momentum and not overburden participants or leadership. Leadership teams will need to meet more frequently in person or by conference call to prepare for each meeting. Coalitions may also form smaller

workgroups that may meet more frequently to tackle specific objectives, working on model documents, training materials or outreach materials in response to state legislation for example.

Your geographic scope should be manageable for participants to travel to meetings. More than an hour travel time is likely to discourage attendance. Coalitions may consider reimbursing members for travel beyond a certain distance.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are often needed for school professionals, pest management professionals, registered sanitarians and others and can add value for members to attend and new members to join.

Prior to the first meeting is the time to secure initial funding, determine geographic scope, define goals, set specific preliminary objectives for recruiting, training and educational opportunities, identify potential guest experts and create an initial timeline for the year ahead. The first meeting is a good opportunity to present these plans and get feedback from initial participants.

Who participates in coalitions? Recruiting members for a coalition is an ongoing process and should be a responsibility that is shared by all of the members. Potential participants include:

- ▶ School facilities managers, IPM coordinators, risk managers, food/nutrition managers, superintendents, nurses, maintenance leads, custodial leads, grounds/maintenance leads, PTA/PTO and/or student council representatives.
- ▶ Pest management professionals (PMPs), landscape maintenance professionals.
- ▶ Parents.
- ▶ University faculty and/or local extension.
- ▶ Representatives from state, county and/or tribal departments of agriculture, health, environmental protection, education.
- ▶ Advocacy groups with missions related to child health, pollution prevention, IPM.





Creating Productive Meetings: Primer for Coalition Leaders

Getting everyone there requires lots of advance notice, frequent reminders and useful agendas. Incentives, including food, continuing education units and relevant information motivate members to attend meetings.

Useful meetings address the needs of your participants. Bringing in outside experts who are good presenters can add value. Half-day meetings allow participants time for travel and/or taking care of responsibilities at work.

“Our first meeting was short and didn’t last more than 90 minutes. It resulted in facility managers from some of the largest school districts in Arizona discussing how they could do a better job using IPM strategies.”

– Dr. Dawn Gouge,
Arizona Coalition Leader

School crawl-through. These are great opportunities for coalition members to see firsthand what to look for when inspecting their own schools. Small groups of up to eight participants accompanied by an experienced person (two works even better). Crawl-through activities should be



There’s no substitute for hands-on practice inspecting schools for pests, pest-friendly conditions and effective preventive measures.

accompanied by a debriefing so that participants can discuss what they observed and may require longer than a half-day meeting to accommodate.

Wrapping it up. Make sure you capture contact information for everyone in attendance with a sign-in sheet. Ask participants to complete an evaluation before the meeting ends to get feedback on how the meeting met their needs. Meeting agendas, brief minutes and presentations should be captured and made available to those who could not attend. These can be circulated by email or posted to a website. In addition to these documents, participant numbers and evaluations can be very useful for reporting to funders.

Don’t be a stranger in between meetings. *Pest Presses* are great timely tools to circulate monthly to stay in touch, see the following page for where to find them.

Sample Coalition Meeting Agenda

- 1) Welcome – Roll call and introductions
- 2) Guest speaker – IPM Star Certification
- 3) Omaha and Lincoln Demonstration Schools
 - Omaha 2nd school walk-through was Sept 9
 - Lincoln 2nd walk-through was Sept 23
 - Thoughts and what’s next
- 4) Region 7 Indian Nations IPM Meeting on Sept 14
- 5) Expanding coalition
 - Include/involve more schools in Nebraska; send out invitations
 - Training vs. only meeting: have a few speakers/topics at each meeting
- 6) Updates from coalition members
- 7) Next Meeting: February 7 and 8, Urban Pest Management Conference



Tools for Sustainable Coalitions

There are many helpful resources available online that have been utilized by active coalitions across the country. Whether you are looking for tips on communications, budgets, organizational strategy or IPM certification or recognition, there is an array of ready-to-use tools.

Pest Presses are great tools for spreading the IPM message, including timely issues specific to seasonal pest problems. A growing collection is available for your use and adaptation for your own coalition *pest press*. For some of the most popular pest presses around the country, check out http://www.extension.org/pages/School_IPM:Online_Newsletters_and_Pest_Presses.

Newsletters and Listservs are simple ways to communicate to the entire coalition as well as national and regional school IPM contacts.

Verifiable School IPM Certification offers schools third party certification for practicing high-level IPM. For more information, check out the nationally recognized IPM STAR Certified program at <http://www.ipminstitute.org/ipmstar.htm>.

The EPA's Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP) Program gives members access to resources and promotional tools for their IPM programs. For more information, go to <http://www.epa.gov/pep/pep/>.

Low-cost conference call options at FreeConferenceCall.com to cut costs. Saving funds on organizational fees allows coalitions to invest more in IPM. To see how to set up free conference calls, visit <http://www.freeconferencecall.com/services.asp>.

Meeting participant sign-in sheets are important to have at each meeting to collect attendance and the contact information of new coalition members. To print sign-in sheets for use at your coalition meeting,

To join the national School IPM listserv, visit <http://schoolipm.ifas.ufl.edu/Florida/list.htm>. To receive the national School IPM 2015 eNewsletter, visit http://www.ipminstitute.org/school_ipm_2015/index.htm.

The Coalition Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) document supports the relationship between the coalition at large and its individual members and forms a mutual commitment to work towards shared IPM goals. To obtain a copy of the MOU for use in your coalition, visit http://www.ipminstitute.org/school_ipm_2015/School_IPM_Coalition_MOU.

Public Recognition for school districts and IPM leaders through local media highlights IPM accomplishments to new audiences within the community. For personal achievements, award plaques can be provided for school staff that played an important role in the success of an IPM program.

visit http://ipminstitute.org/school_ipm_2015/Coalition_Participant_SignIn_Sheet_PDF.pdf.

Meeting evaluations serve as a tool to gain feedback from participants, making sure that the coalition is providing value to its members. To print meeting evaluation forms for your own coalition, visit http://www.ipminstitute.org/school_ipm_2015/School_IPM_Coalition_Meeting_Participant_Evaluation_PDF.pdf.

Model funding proposal provides text for your adaptation for the typical categories requested by a funder including justification, workplan, timeline, budget, measurement and reporting of outputs and outcomes. For a model funding proposal, visit http://www.ipminstitute.org/school_ipm_2015/School_IPM_Coalition_Funding_Resources.

Additional Resources covering an array of school IPM topics can be found at http://www.ipminstitute.org/school_ipm_2015/resources.htm.



Budgeting for Success

People are what make a coalition work. Leaders should anticipate spending 80 to 100 hours a year to manage a coalition that meets quarterly. A number of tasks can be delegated to support staff including circulating meeting announcements and agendas, managing RSVPs, arranging meeting sites and logistics, summarizing evaluations and assisting with reports to funders and others.

Meeting costs can include handouts and refreshments, and if needed, room and AV equipment rental, travel and honoraria for guest presenters. For a list of professional school IPM speakers, visit http://ipminstitute.org/school_ipm_2015/IPM_Speakers_Bureau.pdf.

Equipment may include inspection supplies such as a hand lens, flashlight, spatula, screwdrivers, a telescoping mirror and a digital camera. A laptop computer, storage media, speakers and projector, are useful for meetings.

Supplies can include flip charts, paper, printer toner, insect monitors and pest id guides.

Overhead or indirect costs include rent, utilities and other costs that may be charged by some organizations including universities to recoup their costs of hosting a project leader and support staff. University rates can be as high as 50% and need to be considered if applying for grants through the university.

Travel expenses for coalition leaders, and for members to attend meetings may be reimbursed.

References

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National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council Committee on Pesticides in the Diets of Infants and Children. 1993. *Pesticides in the Diets of Infants and Children*. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C. http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=2126.

Sample Annual Budget

Coalition budgets can vary greatly depending on whether or not leadership requires compensation, travel support is provided for participants, no-cost meeting space is available, etc. This is a sample budget:

Personnel: \$15,000, or 250 hours at an average cost of \$60 per hour for salary and fringe benefits.

Meetings/Trainings: \$4800 or \$1200 per meeting including guest presenter honorarium and travel (\$800 per meeting), refreshments (\$300 per meeting), handouts (\$60 per meeting) and miscellaneous supplies.

Meeting Travel: \$2000 or \$500 per meeting for leader and participant mileage.

Total Annual

Direct Costs: \$21,800

Overhead: \$4360, or 20% of the total direct costs.

Total Annual Budget: \$26,160

Sources of Funding

Coalitions and school IPM projects generally have received funding from a number of sources. For a list of potential funders, visit http://www.ipminstitute.org/school_ipm_2015/School_IPM_Coalition_Funding_Resources.

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