



## Press Release

### **A SAFER WAY TO KEEP SCHOOLS PEST FREE; STOP SCHOOL PESTS LAUNCHES FREE ONLINE COURSES**

#### **New Online Courses Help K12 School Employees Make Schools Healthier Places to Learn**

MADISON, Wis., December 14, 2017 - Stop School Pests, a new online training program, is now available to school employees across the United States and beyond at [www.StopSchoolPests.com](http://www.StopSchoolPests.com). The training will help schools reduce pest complaints, pesticide use, and pest-related costs, and improve food and fire safety by teaching staff how to prevent pest problems before they occur.

Students spend a major part of each day in school – on average 30 hours each week. Exposure to pests and pesticides can create an unhealthy school environment. Mice and cockroaches can cause or trigger asthma attacks and allergies. Similarly, an over-reliance on pesticides can lead school employees and children to be exposed unnecessarily to dangerous chemicals.

“Schools must be safe, healthy spaces for students and staff. It’s important to manage pests with smart, common-sense approaches that minimize exposure to pests and chemicals,” said Dr. Dawn Gouge who was involved in the project from its beginning and is a Professor and Public Health IPM Specialist at University of Arizona’s Entomology Department. “These training modules will make that possible for any school district, no matter the size or budget.”

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a long-term approach to preventing pests utilizing the least-hazardous, most effective, sustainable and cost-effective methods. Stop School Pests new online training program will provide important tools to help school staff implement more effective pest-control programs.

Teachers, school nurses, administrators, food service personnel, facility managers, landscape and ground managers, maintenance and custodial staff – every staff member plays a role in making sure food sources for pests are minimized and making sure that surfaces and outdoor areas are safe for children to touch.

The Stop School Pests portal offers specific training modules for each role that address the basics of smart pest management, identifies common pests found in schools, and the health risks associated with pesticides and pests. The training is free and open to anyone and is administered by the non-profit organization IPM Institute of North America. Presentation files can be requested at no cost.

The training content was developed by the School IPM Working Group and through a multi-year, nationwide project with funding by the US EPA, the USDA, the North Central IPM Center, and the National Education Association.

Stop School Pests aims to make affordable, accessible training available to all involved in making sure schools are healthy spaces for every child and employee in every community.

All training courses are available at no cost at [www.StopSchoolPests.com](http://www.StopSchoolPests.com). After a short quiz, users can download a certificate.

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