



### **Green Clean Schools Act Would Impact Schools**

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HERRIN, Ill. - New state legislation aimed at making cleaning supplies for school districts more environmentally friendly appears to be well on its way to passing both houses of the General Assembly.

House Bill 0895 creates the Green Cleaning Schools Act. If passed and signed into law by Gov. Rod Blagojevich, it would establish guidelines and specifications for environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products for use in school facilities. The bill recently passed out of the Senate Education Committee by a 9-0 vote. The bill next goes for a full floor vote in the Senate. The legislation states that "no later than 90 days after implementation of the guidelines and specifications, all elementary and secondary public and non-public schools shall establish a green cleaning policy."

Moreover, schools should exclusively purchase and use environmentally sensitive cleaning products, but may first deplete their existing cleaning and maintenance supply stocks and implement the new requirements in the procurement cycle for the following school year.

"Environmentally-preferred purchasing and green cleaning are not simply about switching to those kinds of products and equipment," said Jim Sheffer, owner of Herrin-based Cannon Distributing.

Cannon Distributing, along with the Peoria-based AmSan Vonachen, provides janitorial and paper supplies to the Southern Illinois Public Cooperative, which in turn, distributes the goods to schools statewide at a discounted rate.

The SIPC, which presently serves 170 school districts in Illinois, was organized to support and advance the collective activities of school districts located in the southern district of the state as a means to improve management and purchases.

"Green cleaning is about examining entire custodial operations based upon an assessment of spaces, products, and work practices to maximize cleanliness, both in terms of dirt and germs," Sheffer said. "At the same time, the idea is to reduce the consumption

of natural resources and unnecessary hazardous cleaning chemical exposures to students, staff and visitors."

The SIPC, Sheffer said, through the collaborative efforts of the Healthy Schools Campaign, Cannon Distributing, AmSan Vonachen and Corporate Green Team sponsors, is committed to educating custodial staff and administrators to the benefits of implementing a program that focuses on cleaning for health and safety and promotes cleaning productivity for efficiency and effectiveness.

"SIPC corporate partners have already established an impressive record of developing and implementing results-based Green Cleaning programs for SIPC green-thinking pioneers that have boosted the indoor environmental health of their buildings, while reducing custodial operational costs," Sheffer said.

Tad Vonachen, vice president of sales for AmSan (Peoria-based American Sanitary), said he is excited to partner with Cannon Distributing and the Healthy School Campaign.

That partnership, he said, provides school districts throughout the state a comprehensive Environmentally Preferred Purchasing & Green Cleaning program that through their membership in the SIPC, both enhances the cleanliness and health of schools and reduces the overall cost of their custodial operation.

"Our combined efforts and resources impact the lives of many," Vonachen said, including students, who will be learning in cleaner, healthier environments; administrators and teachers, who will see education taking place at all levels in their building; and custodians, who will now have the tools, the training, and the job security to perform their duties at the highest level."

Mount Vernon School Superintendent Kevin Settle is a fan of SIPC products and service.

"Our city schools have benefited in several ways from joining SIPC," he said. "The obvious ones include lower prices, improved inventory control, increased productivity, enhanced building cleanliness and simplified procurement process. The interchange of ideas and best business practices has created tremendous value for our district."