

# BLUE VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Building Momentum — Linking IAQ Management to Student Success*

## PROGRAM RESULTS

In 2000, Blue Valley School District (BVSD) launched an IAQ management program to address increased parent interest in environmental issues, counter the risks of a public relations disaster like the one that occurred when a neighboring district closed a school for IAQ problems, and ensure outstanding learning environments for their students. BVSD applied the *IAQ Tools for Schools* model to create a structure for facilities management that tied their existing programs together and leveraged resources to radically accelerate their progress. *“Our program’s success didn’t materialize overnight. It started with a vision and expectation of excellence, and we have continued to push the program forward at every opportunity.”* – Dave Hill, Executive Director, Facilities and Operations

**Organize for Success — Build an Effective Team:** BVSD created an interdisciplinary IAQ team that includes design and construction, safety, energy, operations and maintenance, and custodial functions. A designated IAQ coordinator leads the team, and everyone in the district knows he is the ‘go-to guy’ for IAQ. The team also includes an executive-level leader who relays the team’s goals and investment needs to the district’s strategic planning committee. *“Before adopting IAQ Tools for Schools, we had a lot of successful, but...unrelated pieces in place for managing our environments...IAQ Tools for Schools gave us a framework for organizing; it provided the comprehensive approach we needed...to pull it all together, strengthen our existing practices...and get more out of our work.”* – Dave Hill, Executive Director, Facilities and Operations

**Assess Your Environments Continuously — Use Technology:** Blue Valley uses technology to benchmark facilities, conduct routine monitoring, and save money and man hours by avoiding problems. *“With regular inspections, we can detect potential problems before [they] become larger issues that require expensive repairs. By demonstrating the cost savings that preventive maintenance can deliver, we convinced the decision-makers that upfront technology investments made sense.”* – Dave Hill, Executive Director, Facilities and Operations

### ACT TO ADDRESS STRUCTURAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL ISSUES: Educate Staff About IAQ to Change Behavior

“We have been able to sustain the excellence of our district’s IAQ management program because we have cultivated an atmosphere of program ownership and building stewardship among all of the employees who are responsible for maintaining excellent IAQ.”

– Dave Hill, Executive Director, Facilities and Operations

*BVSD uses their work order system to track reported IAQ concerns and monitors operating expenditures to capture cost savings from IAQ upgrades.*

- ▲ Fewer per capita IAQ concerns each year.
- ▲ Reduced operating costs through IAQ upgrades (e.g., \$23,000 energy savings at one school in one year).
- ▲ Rise in test scores every year since program began (highest ACT scores in the state; four out of six of state’s top-ranked schools are in BVSD).
- ▲ Marked decrease in lost instructional time due to facility problems.

**Plan Your Short and Long-Term Activities — Put Goals in Writing:** Blue Valley institutionalized their program by including IAQ goals in the district’s strategic plan and establishing metrics to evaluate their progress against goals.

**Communicate with Everyone, All the Time — Share Your Goals:** By tying the IAQ work to a goal that people care deeply about, BVSD was able to build the depth of commitment the IAQ initiative needed right from the start.

**Act to Address Structural, Institutional and Behavioral Issues — Educate Staff About IAQ to Change Behavior:** Blue Valley used training to cultivate a culture of stewardship and to create IAQ champions across the organization. All facilities staff members were trained to identify root causes of IAQ problems and to avoid cosmetic fixes.

**Evaluate Your Results for Continuous Improvement — Solicit Feedback:** BVSD asks occupants to rate the school’s indoor environment on annual surveys and aims to receive scores of at least four out of five from 100 percent of respondents.