



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
Richard P. Mills
President of The University and
Commissioner of Education

May 6, 2009

Dear New York State School Administrator:

On behalf of the New York State Office of General Services (OGS) and the State Education Department, along with partnering state agencies, the Departments of Health, Environmental Conservation, and Labor, we are pleased to announce the launch of the New York State Green Cleaning Program website:

GreenCleaning.ny.gov

Chapter 584 of the Laws of 2005, known as the *New York State Green Cleaning Law*, requires the mandatory use of environmentally-sensitive cleaning and maintenance products in all New York's public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools. In enacting this law, New York became the first state in the nation to use legislation to address the hazardous impact of cleaning chemicals in schools on the well-being of our children. Furthermore, in September 2007, the Board of Regents announced its NY-CHPs High Performance Schools Guidelines as an appendix of the New York State Education Department Manual of Planning Standards. These guidelines, in accordance with Education Law 409-I and State Finance Law 163-b, direct schools to develop a formal policy supporting the use of New York State Office of General Services approved green cleaning and maintenance products. GreenCleaning.ny.gov provides direct links to this information and more.

The Green Cleaning Program website reaches beyond the mandate of the law by providing schools with a comprehensive toolkit for voluntarily planning and implementing an entire green cleaning program. The approach views school maintenance and cleaning as interrelated with the health of individuals, communities, and the environment. It not only provides a list of approved cleaning products, but also offers ways to decrease the amounts of dirt and allergens entering the school, and reduce labor-intensive cleaning tasks. Central to this is the *Five Steps to a Green Cleaning Program* section of the website that details how to design and implement a successful program. In support of the *Five Steps* are:

- Green Cleaning Best Practices;
- OGS-Approved Green Cleaning Products List;
- Customizable Templates and Documents; and
- Online Training Programs (currently under development and anticipated to be available by the end of the school year).

In addition, the website contains information on key policies and guidelines, additional resources, and the opportunity to register for program updates. Whether you are simply doing research, or considering a complete program, OGS and State Education are committed to providing you with the best possible support and service. By reducing the toxicity of the chemicals used to clean and maintain school buildings, we will not only eliminate many health concerns but also provide an environment that helps children learn how to be stewards of our earth.

We invite you to use the website and look forward to working together to create a cleaner, greener, and healthier future. For more information, please contact the New York State Office of General Services, Environmental Services Unit at: (518) 408-1871 or nysogsesu@ogs.state.ny.us.

Sincerely,



John C. Egan
Commissioner of General Services



Richard P. Mills
Commissioner of Education