



Addressing Indoor Air Quality in Schools and COVID-19

The following documents published by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are excellent sources of information to aid schools in preparing to reopen for in person classes.

“Considerations for Schools” May 2020 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

“Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation” May 2020 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html>

“Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes” May 2020 <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/guidance-cleaning-and-disinfecting-public-spaces-workplaces-businesses-schools-and-homes>

We agree with the CDC regarding their recommendation to increase the circulation of outdoor air, but care must be taken if windows and doors are opened to bring in additional outside air. The unfiltered outdoor air can pose other issues such as bringing in asthma and allergy triggers along with increasing the indoor humidity to a level that can promote mold growth. In August when most schools start for the fall session it is common to see both high pollen counts and high relative humidity levels.

We feel a better approach is to adjust the outdoor air dampers on the HVAC system so the maximum amount of outdoor air is being brought in through the HVAC system that the system can manage while still maintaining temperature and humidity. That way the air is filtered, conditioned and dehumidified before entering the classrooms. We recommend following CDC’s guidance for starting up and monitoring the HVAC system found in **“Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation”**