



# TOXIC FREE SCHOOLS

## ONE BILL IN A SUITE OF "TOXICS-FREE-KIDS" ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BILLS

CHIEF SPONSOR: SENATOR DEMBROW

### BACKGROUND

In 2009 the Oregon Legislature passed SB 637 on School Integrated Pest Management. More than a decade later the bill is in need of modernization in order to help schools protect student's health.

## The Toxic Free Schools Act will . . .

- Provide resources and technological assistance to school districts to reduce harmful pesticide use.
- Require a diverse Stakeholder Advisory Committee to help guide school Integrated Pest Management (IPM) planning.
- Modernize pesticide record-keeping processes and increase transparency for communities.
- Provide equitable pest management support for schools.

**This bill  
prioritizes  
environmental  
health and  
toxic free  
learning  
environments.**



# Toxic-Free Schools

## CHILDREN'S HEALTH

**How does this bill protect children's health?** Children are at higher risk for health effects from exposure to pesticides than adults because their internal organs are still developing and maturing. This bill will help reduce children's exposure at school.

**What's the big take-away?** The Toxic Free Schools Act will give Department of Education resources to support school districts to adopt a "prevention-first" method of pest control practices to prevent children's exposures to pesticides on athletic fields, playgrounds, cafeterias and learning spaces.

## SAFE SCHOOLS

**What is the problem?** Oregon school districts and regulatory agencies have currently lack coordination and resources to implement safer pesticide use practices. As a result, unintentional yet illegal pesticide uses are occurring at Oregon schools.

**Who is impacted?** Currently, school children, faculty, and staff may be harmed from regular exposure to pesticides in schools.

**How will Toxic Free Schools help?** Toxics Free Schools will create a path towards modernized record keeping and safer choices for pest control under the Healthy and Safe Schools Act. This will put safety measure in place to prevent unintended pesticide harm.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & EQUITY

**How is this an Environmental Justice concern?** People in historically disadvantaged communities already bear the brunt of increased exposures to harmful chemicals. Students who attend schools in these neighborhoods are routinely exposed to air, water and soil toxins and may have more underlying health conditions than students in higher-income areas.

**How does this bill address Equity?** Not all schools have resources to implement their IPM plans. This bill will help direct technology resources and training to schools serving low-income communities first.

**How will Toxic Free Schools help?** This bill helps eliminate equity barriers.

## COMMON QUESTIONS

**How will this bill improve IPM in schools?** This bill will give Oregon Department of Education resources to support school districts to improve and IPM in Schools.

**Who will coordinate the new policy?** A Stakeholder Advisory Committee will build new coordination and information sharing between school districts and public health and pest management experts.

**How will this improve access to school pesticide information?** This bill will help schools provide an annual report on prevention efforts, pesticides used, and make it available to parents.

**How will this bill enhance learning environments for children?** This bill, combined with other public health protocols, can help support children's healthy development by reducing exposures to toxic chemicals that may weaken their maturing immune systems.