

THE HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT: ENCOURAGING SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN CALIFORNIA TO ADOPT INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

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Governor Davis signed AB 2260 (the Healthy Schools Act of 2000 or HSA) into law in September 2000. This new right-to-know law requires schools that apply pesticides to notify parents and staff, post signs, and keep publicly accessible records. Each school district must designate an IPM coordinator to carry out these requirements, but districts do not have to change their pest management practices or adopt IPM. Some school districts embraced IPM well before HSA existed, while others have steadily moved toward IPM to avoid controversy and the considerable paperwork each time a pesticide is applied. Still, many districts have not yet adopted IPM practices due to fears of cost and efficacy, and treat generic insect pests on a calendar basis using perimeter sprays to supposedly create a pest-free barrier around structures. HSA provides an opportunity for DPR to promote IPM through the law's requirements to establish an IPM-in-schools web site, identify and train IPM coordinators, assist districts in establishing IPM policies and programs, and develop an IPM guidebook. DPR is focusing IPM education on pest biology, least-hazardous pest management, and emphasizing good sanitation practices and proper building maintenance, targeting not only school facilities managers or IPM coordinators, but pest control operators as well.