

Environmental

Advocates

NY

EANY SUPPORTS Protecting Students from Indoor Air Pollution



Memo #54

[A.6684 \(Fernandez et al\)](#)

[S.1121 \(Kaminsky\)](#)

Explanation:

This bill will establish an indoor air quality program for schools including new regulations for inspection and evaluation of indoor air quality. New York State currently has no regulations or guidance to protect children from indoor air pollutants, despite the health and educational impacts of poor indoor air quality.

[Indoor air pollution](#) is among the top five environmental public health risks and can come from a variety of sources including asbestos, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, lead, volatile organic compounds and radon. Indoor air pollution can cause both long and short term health effects including exacerbation of respiratory illness, allergic reaction, dizziness, nausea, coughing and headaches. The exposure to these pollutants during the school day can impact the performance of both students and teachers.

Children spend the majority of the school day indoors and they are particularly [at risk to poor air quality](#) because their lungs are still developing, and due to a smaller body mass they take in more air as a proportion of their body weight than adults. Children also exhibit more hand to mouth activities than adults, which puts them at greater risk of interacting with pollutants such as lead that linger on floors, walls and window seals.

Through this legislation schools that receive a complaint or volunteer for an inspection will be assisted by the Department of Health in developing a plan to improve the indoor air quality. By establishing new regulations and guidance, this bill will protect the health of children and reduce their exposure to harmful pollutants.

Summary:

This legislation amends the public health law by adding a new title 4-A to article 25, to require the Department of Health to establish an indoor air quality program and develop regulations for inspections and evaluations of indoor air quality. The Department of Health in coordination with the Department of Environmental Conservation will also develop a guidance document for improving and managing indoor air quality in schools as well as a model indoor air quality program that schools can adopt.