

Entering Green Cleaning through the Back Door



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What prompts school facilities to get on board with green cleaning programs? The answers vary. For some the decision may be driven by health impact, environmental stewardship, or simply compliance.

Keith Webb, Executive Director of Plant Services, [Newport News Public Schools \(NNPS\)](#), Newport News, Virginia, is pleased that the NNPS cleaning program, under Custodial Supervisor Marcella Bullock, received the *Green Cleaning Award for Schools and Universities' Grand-level* recognition in 2013 (American School & University, 2015), but he

admits achieving this green milestone took many years and got its start through the “back door”.

“When I first started in 2007, I did nothing but observe,” Webb notes. “I saw we were overstaffed and using ineffective tools—such as cloth-bag upright vacuums, mop buckets with wringers for hard floor care, and lots of cleaning chemical—so our ‘front door’ focus was on right-sizing, efficiency and leaning operations.”

This meant eliminating about 50 FTE—through attrition rather than layoffs—and diverting a sizable sum of money to purchase leading-edge equipment and supplies, including:

- ✓ Backpack-style vacuums
- ✓ HEPA-filtered upright vacuums
- ✓ Engineered-Water Auto Scrubbers
- ✓ Wall-mounted onsite-generated engineered-water solutions

Over time, Mr. Webb realized cleaning had “gone green” in a large way, albeit accidentally, by redirecting resources to improving department operations, methods and training that at the same time produced a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment.

[Read full blog.](#)

Reference

American School & University. (2015). *Green Cleaning Award for Schools & Universities*. Retrieved from American School & University: <http://asumag.com/green-cleaning-award>