

An ADA Tale of Two Schools

For some schools, the week or so before winter break can be a budget-breaker. Those five days typically mark the height of flu and cold season and schools feel the fevered heat by experiencing high levels of absenteeism. Consequently, schools that are reimbursed by the state according to Average Daily Attendance (ADA) can lose thousands of dollars during those few days.

Keeping Absenteeism under 3%

In Athens, Ala., there is some encouraging news for ADA schools. As Athens City Schools district nurse Nadine Rockwell was reviewing attendance numbers for the week before winter break, she was surprised to see a startling difference between the absenteeism at the elementary schools and the district's middle school.

"The elementary schools were running between 40 - 50 absences a day, which is about 20% absenteeism," says Rockwell. "However, the middle school was running about 13 absences a day, or about 3%." Same district, same families ... so why the difference?

Rockwell quickly picked up the phone and contacted the Athens Middle School. "She called me and asked, 'What are you doing over there?'"

says Joe Jackson, principal at Athens Middle School.

The answer was quite simple. The difference between the schools was the implementation of a program using a combination of H₂Orange²® 117 Cleaner-Sanitizer-Virucide-HBV, Critical Care™ Disinfectant-Fungicide-Virucide, and hand sanitizer.

Environmentally Preferred Options

"We do not have enough research to pinpoint the use of cleaners and hand sanitizers as the sole reason for attendance differences," points out Jackson, "however we used these products and in turn, students' health improved compared to other schools in the district."

The middle school discovered H₂Orange² 117 about four years ago when it was searching for a

product that was an environmentally preferred alternative to traditional cleaners, but would also kill staph bacteria. Jackson sought the expertise of Banks Industries, Inc., the local janitorial supply distributor that specialized in sanitizing critical environments such as hospitals. The distributor suggested H₂Orange² 117, a hydrogen peroxide cleaner that is also an EPA registered sanitizer.

Additionally, Banks Industries suggested an extra layer of control by using Critical Care Disinfectant-Fungicide-Virucide as an "overspray" on surfaces frequently touched by students that act as disease transfer points.

Critical Care uses a unique silver ion technology that provides a fast 30-second kill on staph, as well as salmonella and pseudomonas aeruginosa. It also continues to protect surfaces at the school against these common bacteria for up to 24 hours. Unlike other disinfectants, Critical Care is odorless and is non-irritating to skin and eyes.

In addition to using these cleaning and disinfecting products, Athens Middle School encourages a healthy use of hand sanitizers, particularly right before lunch. "We have a hand sanitizer in every classroom," Jackson points out. "And the staff really encourages the use of it."

There will always be students who come to school sick, but the statistics at Athens Middle School are encouraging to educators trying to decrease the spread of illness in the school and increase their Average Daily Attendance.

For a school that is reimbursed \$36 per student per day, that can quickly add up to thousands of dollars each month, and hundreds of thousands each year... particularly during cold and flu season. And that's nothing to sneeze at.

"The elementary schools were running about 20% absenteeism while the middle school was running about 3%."

*Nadine Rockwell
District Nurse
Athens City Schools*



Athens Middle School in Athens, Ala. caught the attention of the district nurse, as its attendance levels remained at 97% during the year's highest "flu week," while other schools were at 80% attendance. The school uses a combination of H₂Orange² 117, Critical Care and hand sanitizers.