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Pest management practices in our nation's schools are in need of improvement. More than 50 published surveys and studies since 1994 have documented deficiencies including unmanaged pest infestations, unsafe and illegal use of pesticides and unnecessary pesticide exposures to students, staff and visitors at schools. Improvement is feasible and affordable. Pest complaints and pesticide use in schools and other public buildings have been reduced by 71 to 93% through Integrated Pest Management (IPM), with no long-term increase in costs. In 2006, a working group was formed to develop a National Pest Management Strategic Plan for school IPM with a goal of achieving full implementation of IPM in all of our schools by 2015. The plan includes stakeholder-identified priorities for accelerating IPM adoption in schools, action steps and timeline, details on the current status of pest management in our school systems and our current understanding of best practices. Ongoing objectives include meeting plan priorities, updating the plan on a regular basis, annual evaluation and progress reporting, and coordination by a national and regional school IPM working groups.

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