STAPLES Advantage

# Cleaning Smarter, Every Day.

## Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Staples, Inc.

At Staples, we play an integral part in supporting our customers' environmental initiatives. With more than 3,000 environmentally preferable products, we provide customers with solutions that are right for their business, resulting in saved resources and more sustainable operations.

Below is an example of how one educational organization significantly reduced their spend on cleaning supplies as a result of turning to Staples, while also benefitting from more effective, safe and environmentally friendly products.

### The Company

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) comprises 172 schools in Charlotte, NC. One of the country's largest 25 school districts, CMS serves 137,000 students in grades pre-K through 12.

### The Challenge

CMS is committed to providing its students with a superior education, and maintaining its facilities is critical to achieving that mission. With more than 170 schools, plus several administrative buildings and gymnasiums, CMS was purchasing large volumes of cleaning supplies. The extensive variety of cleaners were posing two major problems: 1) they were extremely costly, particularly when examining the dilution rate and the price per use; and 2) the supplies were challenging to mix and dilute, resulting in unusable solutions and substantial product waste.

As a result, CMS decided to investigate alternative cleaning supplies and published a request for proposal (RFP). CMS wanted to condense cleaners to four main items: a neutral cleaner, glass cleaner, bathroom cleaner and disinfectant. While price was a key criterion, the items also needed to be environmentally friendly and easy to dilute.

> ***"Our partnership with Staples has yielded terrific results. "We're saving valuable dollars that can be allocated elsewhere, our facilities have never looked better and our staff is pleased with the cleaning power of the products."***
>
> Rusty Fuller,
> Custodial Manager,
> CMS

cms®
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

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In addition, the vendor of choice had to be able to quickly deliver the products and train CMS' staff on product usage, as they aimed to implement 600 cleaning solution dispensing systems before the start of the new school year.

> ***"We wanted products that would reduce the negative impact of chemicals on users and the environment, but it was also critical that the products were effective. While we conducted an extensive cost analysis during our vendor evaluation, it really came down to how well the products worked. With Staples, it was the ideal outcome – the products were cost- and environmentally friendly and performed to our high level of standards."***
>
> Rusty Fuller,
> Custodial Manager,
> CMS

### The Solution

CMS extended the RFP to current suppliers, which included Staples, as CMS was already purchasing select supplies through the company. Staples had an existing, strong relationship with CMS' facilities group and as part of the RFP process made an initial presentation to demonstrate recommended cleaning products and the cost-per-gallon versus the cost-per-use.

While CMS requested four key cleaning products, Staples was able to meet their requirements with just three products from its Sustainable Earth line. Safe and environmentally preferred, each of the products also had high dilution rates, designed to reduce waste and lower end-use costs. For example, one gallon of Sustainable Earth Neutral Multi-Use Cleaner (SE64) has a dilution rate of 1:256, resulting in 257 gallons of ready-to-use, all-purpose cleaner when mixed with water.

CMS tested each of Staples' recommended products, which would be used on a daily basis, in real-life cleaning situations. Previously, CMS' janitorial staff based product effectiveness on smell – if the product had a strong aroma, employees assumed it was working. During the testing phase, CMS was impressed that the Sustainable Earth products had a very low odor and no lingering chemical smells, yet were extremely effective.

Staples was awarded the account due to its products' impressive performance, cost-effectiveness and environmentally responsible ingredients. The Staples team quickly went into action, installing 300 ExpressMix® dispensing systems and 300 custom-built units for the Neutral Multi-Use Cleaner. Staples trained CMS' staff on safe dilution, dispensing and usage processes, however, the Sustainable Earth dilution system made the measurement and mixing process truly effortless.

### The Results

As a result of using Staples' Sustainable Earth products and consolidating to three cleaning solutions across 170 schools, CMS has reduced cleaning supply costs by 20 percent, with over $30,000 saved in the first year alone. In addition, the increased accuracy of product dilution methods has allowed CMS to dramatically reduce chemical waste. The school district is also participating in an eco-friendly, "go green" program, leveraging its experiences with Staples' Sustainable Earth line.

### The Future

Staples' contract with CMS was recently renewed and both parties anticipate a long-term partnership that continues to deliver great benefits.

To learn more, please visit www.staplesadvantage.com.

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