



CASE STUDY

BELLEVUE SCHOOL DISTRICT: MAKING THE DEAN'S LIST

SCHOOL PESTS MEET THEIR MATCH WITH SPRAGUE PEST SOLUTIONS

The presence of pests in a school environment – whether a pre-school classroom or a dorm room at a four-year college – is a cause for concern. Pests, including rodents, cockroaches, flies, and stinging insects, not only are annoying, but they can disrupt learning, and pose a health risk to students, teachers, staff, and visitors.

Sprague has experience preventing and eliminating pests in schools, and their work with the Bellevue School District in Bellevue, Washington demonstrates they have done their homework when it comes to creating a pest control programs that promote a pest-free (and pro-learning) environment.

THE CHALLENGE

With more than 35 separate locations, 20,000 students and nearly 3,000 teachers and staff, the Bellevue School District is a complex account for even the most experienced pest control professional.

School districts, like Bellevue, are attractive to pests for a variety of reasons – abundant food and moisture sources, numerous harborage and access points, and unintentional human actions that contribute to pest-conducive conditions. Regardless of these factors, a rodent in a school kitchen, flies near a loading dock dumpster or a yellow jacket nest on a playground are all unacceptable in a school setting.

In Bellevue, construction types and the surrounding environment differ from school to school. Each school has a food service component that requires deliveries of food and other supplies and generates lots of pest-attracting food waste. And all locations have students, staff, vendors, and visitors coming in and out of buildings constantly, this increasing the chance of pests being introduced to the school environment.

Adding to the complexity of scale is that service visits must be scheduled during off hours, weekends, or school breaks, meaning service turnarounds needs to be timely and efficient.

An example of where Sprague went above and beyond to identify the root cause of a pest issue and deliver an effective solution was when a teacher complained that her students were suffering from bee stings while sitting at their desks.

A member of the school maintenance staff went to the classroom and discovered a room full of yellow jackets. The students were relocated, and the search began to identify the source or entry point. The maintenance staff popped the ceiling tiles and the lenses off light fixtures. They went to the roof and checked the HVAC ducts but found no nests.



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Gary Jennings

Regional Account Manager,
Sprague

They turned off the lights, opened the windows and called Sprague. The Route Manager's inspection discovered the wasps were gaining access from behind an electrical junction box in the classroom. The nest was in the wall, and on the outside of the building there was a hole not much bigger than the diameter of a pencil, which allowed the yellow jackets to come and go with ease.

After a targeted application to the nesting site and a tactful explanation of what attracted the yellow jackets to the classroom in the first place – multiple half-full cans of soda and pizza boxes piled in the corner from an end of year party (yellow jackets are attracted to the sugars and starches found in the food) the issue was resolved.

This is the type of effort and commitment it takes to get the job done when working in a school environment where the pest control professional is being relied upon to provide a timely solution.

THE SOLUTION

Sprague's approach to pest prevention and control at Bellevue Schools is based on integrated pest management (IPM) principles and always starts with an inspection emphasizing exclusion, sanitation, and elimination of pest conducive conditions.

The pest management programs for Bellevue Schools are customized to each location's specific needs and focus primarily on the exterior of buildings with a mix of approaches including monitoring, trapping, and baiting (where permissible). The school district has flexibility within the program to choose what approach it wants to take, and they also rely on Sprague's expertise to make recommendations.

The earlier example of the overnight trapping effort embodies the strong partnership that Sprague and Bellevue schools have developed. The partnership, however, is not only built on technical expertise and innovation, but with consistent communication and collaboration.

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Jennings credits his contact at Bellevue Schools, Facilities and Maintenance Manager Corey Green and his team for their collaboration and responsiveness when it comes to staying on top of the tasks – sanitation, structural repairs, landscaping, and staff education – that are critical to a successful pest control program.

"They have excellent follow up on our recommendations and take care of any repairs in a prompt fashion," said Jennings. "It is a collaborative effort."

THE RESULT

Pest control is not a popular topic among school administrators. Pests carry diseases, cause allergic reactions, and make students and staff anxious. The presence of pests leaves the impression that the school is dirty and not well-maintained.

"Any association with pests is not good and Sprague makes the case for having pest control services easy," said Bellevue's Green. "We have not had to deal with any serious pest issues while Sprague has been on the job."



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Facilities and Maintenance
Manager, Bellevue Schools

As a result of the strong collaborative relationship between the Sprague and Bellevue School District teams, pest pressure is low in and around the district's properties. That does not mean pests are not an ongoing threat but the programs that have been established are working.

Green credits Sprague for their fast response, transparency, and innovation. He compares pest control services to auto body work or drywall repair.

"If you do a good job with pest control you can't tell, but if you do a bad job, everyone notices," said Green.

FIVE REASONS WHY PEST CONTROL IS ESSENTIAL FOR SCHOOLS

Pest control in schools is essential for very important reasons, since it directly impacts the health, safety, and overall well-being of students, staff, and visitors. Here are some key reasons why professional pest control services are essential in schools:

1. Health and safety of students
2. Promotes and maintains a positive learning environment
3. Protects the reputation of the school
4. Reduces the risk of property damage
5. Establishes a proactive approach, preventing pest issues before they happen

For more information on how Sprague Pest Solutions Quality Assurance and pest management services can protect your brand and keep your facility pest-free, [contact us](#) or call 800.272.4988.



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