Talking About & Advocating for School Cleanliness

Most grade levels can find standards within math, science, or social studies that ask students to interpret, collect, analyze or draw conclusions from data. With that in mind, the following problem set was created using CTU's Guide for Fighting For School Cleanliness, to be used in schools where cleanliness and the practice of these skills is relevant. Completing this problem set gives students an authentic opportunity to interpret a representation of data within the context and CPS and Aramark. This problem set can also be used as a scaffold for students looking to write an evidence-based letter to community members, elected officials, or educational leaders.

After completing the problem set, your students may decide to
   A) write to the CPS's Pedro Martinez, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to let him know about the conditions in your school, with specific evidence cited.
   B) write to Aramark leadership about the conditions in your school, with specific evidence cited.

Students may also want to explore more specifics about the contract with Aramark. Encourage students to read articles, such as the following, to understand the context behind the Aramark contract with CPS.
https://chicago.suntimes.com/education/2021/7/28/22598887/cps-public-schools-aramark-clean-custodian-janitor-contract#:~:text=School%20board%20members%20Wednesday%20voted,next%20three%20years%2C%20starting%20Oct.

About the author:
I created this problem set, in solidarity, to create academic opportunities for our youth to engage with the cleanliness issue many are experiencing in their schools, including my own children. If you have questions or concerns about this problem set, please let me know.
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Problem Set: Fighting for School Cleanliness

<u>Part 1: Interpreting and Drawing Conclusions About the Custodian's Cleaning Schedule</u>

Directions: Answer the following questions about school cleanliness using Figure 1.
The figure and most of the figure's background texts comes from Chicago Teachers Union's [Guide for Fighting For School Cleanliness](#),

In order to comply with cleanliness standards, Aramark and Sodexo agreed on the cleaning schedule, represented as Figure 1: School Cleaning Schedule. The color code represents the frequency, the first column represents areas in the school and columns 2-12 are types of actions that can occur in those areas.

Color code legend: blank = N/A, pink = CLEAN ONCE PER WEEK (1), orange = CLEAN 3 x PER WEEK (3), green = CLEAN 4 x PER WEEK (4), blue = CLEAN DAILY (D)

Area	Sanitize/ disinfect	Spot clean	Dust	Wet Clean horizontal	Empty and clean waste	Dry mop floors	Spot clean floors	Damp mop floors	Vacuum carpets	Burnish floors	Pick up loose trash
Classrooms		4	1	1	D	D	4	1	D		D
Chalkboards/Whiteboards				1							
Offices		4	1	1	D	D	4		D		D
Entrances		D	1	1	D	D	D			1	D
Laboratories		4	1	1	D	D	4	1	D		D
Art Rooms		4	1	1	D	D	4	1	D		D
Library		4	1	1	D	D	4	1	D		D
Auditori:um		4	1	1	3	3			D		D
Stage		4	1	1	3	3					D
Music Rooms		4	1	1	D	D	4	1	D		D
Drinking Fountains	D	D									
Wrestling Room	D		1	1	D		4	1			D
Kitchen											
Stairways		D	1		D		D		D		D
Corridors		D	1		D		D	D		1	D
Cafeteria		D	1		D		D	D			D
Cafeteria Tables											
Cafeteria Chairs											
Restrooms	D	D	1	D			D				D
Locker Rooms and Showers	D	D	1	D			D				D
Gymnasium		1	1	1	D			D	1		
Gymnasium Bleachers		1	1				D				
Shop Area		1	1		D						

Figure 1: School Cleaning Schedule

Figure 1 Background: In 2016, Aramark and Sodexo committed to complying with the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) Level 2 standards for cleanliness, which means:

- ❖ Floors and base moldings shine and/or are bright and clean. There is no buildup in corners or along walls, but there can be up to 2 days' worth of dust, dirt, stains or streaks
- ❖ All vertical and horizontal surfaces are clean, but marks, dust, smudges, and fingerprints are noticeable upon close observation. Lights all work and fixtures are clean.
- ❖ Washroom and shower fixtures and tile gleam and are odor-free. Supplies are adequate.
- ❖ Trash containers and pencil sharpeners hold only daily waste, are clean and odor-free.

Questions:

1. How often should classrooms be dusted?
2. How often are the drinking fountains cleaned?
3. How should drinking fountains be cleaned according to the figure?
4. What gets cleaned on a daily basis in a classroom?
5. Where and at what frequency should custodians empty and clean waste?
6. What gets cleaned in the restrooms and at what frequency?
7. Compare this schedule to what you have noticed in your school. How closely does Figure 1 reflect the schedule of your custodians?
8. Based on what you notice in your school, what part of the schedule are custodians not following through with?
9. What parts of the cleaning schedule **are not** relevant to your school? Explain why.
10. Did anything in Figure 1 surprise you? Explain.
11. How could you use this cleaning schedule to argue for more custodians in your school?

Part 2: Interpreting School Data about Cleanliness

Directions: Answer the following questions about school cleanliness using Figure 2. The figure and most of the figure's background texts comes from Chicago Teachers Union's Guide for Fighting For School Cleanliness,

DATE	AREA	CONCERNS/COMMENTS
10/20/2021	Teacher bathroom near library	Toilet paper/paper towels are not refilled consistently – toilet/floor/sink/mirror does not get washed consistently.
10/20/2021	Library	The library shelves have not been dusted all year by custodians.
10/20/2021	Many classrooms	Long stretches of no mopping (4 weeks)
10/20/2021	Teacher bathroom near 214/Counselor Office	Paper towels consistently not refilled – likely not being cleaned thoroughly?
10/20/2021	Boiler room, behind cage in hallway on 1st floor	Student reported seeing a mouse
10/20/2021	Teacher bathroom, 3rd floor across from 311	No soap dispenser
10/20/2021	Student boys bathroom by library	No paper towels for 3 days; ants collecting around trash can
10/20/2021	Teacher bathroom near dance room	No paper towels for 1 week
10/20/2021	Room 214	Recycling bin not emptied for 2 days
10/20/2021	Room 214	Classroom carpets are being poorly vacuumed – there are food crumbs still on it every morning
10/20/2021	Room 214	Classroom floors unswept for days at a time – food, playdough, paper scraps remain for days
10/21/2021	Girls bathroom across from 304	Soap has been out for past 2 days and saop and paper towels aren't consistently refilled when out
10/19/2021	Room 215	Recycling bin not emptied for 2 days
10/19/2021	Room 215	Classroom carpets are being poorly vacuumed

Figure 2: Sample Cleaning Track Sheet

Figure 2 Background: This is a sample track sheet that was made into a google doc. It was shared among a school, to track every time there is a contractual violation due to the cleanliness of the school. Figure 2 was used as evidence by the teachers at a school that was not being properly cleaned to get CPS to send more workers to clean the school. Each time a concern was recorded in the table, the person writing it down included: details about the issue (under concerns and comments section), the date and the area, or location being documented.

Questions:

1. How many different locations in the school are captured in Figure 2?

2. What was the date range in which the data was collected? How much time is captured?
3. What locations need paper towels according to Figure 2?
4. When and where did students report seeing a mouse?
5. Who can you infer is collecting data based on Figure 2?
6. What are some of the cleanliness problems in this school?
7. Did you notice any patterns in the data represented in Figure 2?
8. How could you use this data to argue for more custodians in your school?

Part 3: Taking Action in Your School

Directions: Consider how you might use the track sheet in your own school as part of a school effort to address cleanliness issues. In science (or math) class, for example, students could work on data collection, interpretation, and reporting. In English class, students could work on a persuasive letter. In social science class, students could analyze the power structures involved and the historical context behind the privatization of custodians in CPS.

How could your school use this track sheet to capture cleanliness issues?
Consider using the track sheet example to create your own and capture data in your school for 1 day, 1 week, or longer. What do you notice about the data you collected? What will you do collectively with your data?