



Unified School District



ELK GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT RELIES ON BACKPACK VACUUMS, EXPLORES CORDLESS

Elk Grove Unified School District spans **72 BUILDINGS** **6.3 MILLION SQ. FT**

of facility space including elementary, middle, and high schools in addition to one continuation school and one special needs facility. Each school accommodates anywhere from 600 to 3000 students, faculty, and staff on a daily basis.

Area Supervisors Ruben Valim and Renate Bates help to manage a cleaning staff of 250 FTEs and anywhere from 40-90 active substitute custodians. According to their website, the school district's goal is to ensure that their buildings are kept to a standard level of care that is conducive to learning. In pursuit of that goal, Elk Grove moved from upright vacuums to ProTeam® high performance backpack vacuums in 2004.

"We wanted to get dangerous things like dust and pollen out of our facilities. People with allergies can be very sensitive to pollutants," said Bates. "ProTeam backpack vacuums filter out impurities. You're picking up debris from the carpet and not sending it back into the air."

Before the transition to backpack vacuums, Tony Almeida, manager of custodial services, conducted a test and found that a cleaner could vacuum four to five classrooms per hour with an upright vacuum and 11 classrooms per hour with a backpack vacuum. Initially, the cleaning staff was skeptical about wearing a vacuum instead of pushing it along the ground.

"First, we all looked at it and said, 'I don't want that thing on my shoulders,'" said Valim who was a frontline cleaner at the time. "When we actually worked with the ProTeam backpack vacuums, we were so happy with them."

In recent months, one facility in the district became a challenge to clean. As the hosting site for district meetings, the district office is constantly busy, and staff occupies the building until late each night. To solve this challenge, the custodial department implemented the cordless GoFree® Flex Pro backpack vacuum. Running at just 63.7 decibels, the vacuum is quiet enough to not disturb meetings happening nearby. Without a cord trailing behind, it is safer to vacuum around building occupants and maintain consistent vacuuming schedules.

"Overall, we've been very satisfied with the GoFree Flex Pro," said Valim. "It definitely cleans faster, because you don't have to fight the cord. It is also more maneuverable and convenient."

The GoFree Flex Pro cordless backpack vacuum cleans 30 percent faster than a corded backpack vacuum and five times faster than an upright. Weighing in at only 18 pounds with approximately 75 minutes of continuous cleaning, it is among the most innovative cordless units in the industry today.

Custodians at Elk Grove have extended their reach beyond the floor by adding high dusting attachments to their backpack vacuums.

"Rather than using a duster on ceiling fans and air vents, we are exploring additional tools by incorporating the high dusting attachments to capture dust with the vacuum. Then we are doing less steps and cleaning the air," said Valim.



All of these additions serve the purpose of capturing more soil, dust, and pollutants to create a healthier indoor environment where students and faculty can do their best work.

"Our program is built around green cleaning, sustainability, and Cleaning for Health," said Bates. "I want the same thing for the kids at school that I would want for my own kids: a healthy learning life in a chemical-free and dust-free environment."