

School Pest News

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Keller ISD Uses Trap Guards™ to Solve a Roach Problem

Roaches—they are everywhere! That was the cry before the start of school at Keller ISD. Whitley Road Elementary school had been invaded by huge American cockroaches. The problem was so bad that the pest control contractor informed the IPM Coordinator, Tommy Lane, that they could really do nothing until they sealed up the building.

Whitley Elementary is no different from any other school building in a growing community. It's a new building with about 600 students, and lots of places for cockroaches to enter.

As with many school districts in the south, during the summer the campus is

vacant. And, as Keller discovered, no water flowing into the floor drains during the summer allows American roaches to come in from the sewer lines to visit.

Lane, along with his supervisor John Gann, Facilities Director, met with their preventative maintenance crew to start sealing their buildings. However, they soon discovered the bigger problem was coming from the floor drains. That's when they turned to Lead Plumber, Darrell Kennedy. Kennedy began researching solutions to the problem of how to seal unintended drains. "That's when we found a little unknown device called a trap

guard", he said.

The trap guard <http://www.trapguard.com/> acts as a barrier to prevent not just sewer gases from coming up from the drain, but also roaches or anything else that can crawl up the drain. This device is inserted into the drain and sealed with a water base sealant. "You can purchase these items from plumbing supply sources, but they are hard to find" according to Kennedy and Lane.

Now for the good news.

Once Keller decided this was the alternative they were going to take they went all out. At Whitley Road they purchased

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Will bed bugs become a problem in schools?

Some school districts are beginning to worry about bed bugs. About a year ago the [Bracken County School District in Kentucky](#) closed their doors for a day to make sure no stray bed bugs were left behind following a find of a single bed bug in classroom. The bug was supposed to have come from a student whose home had bed bugs.

This month the [Columbus Dispatch](#), in Ohio, reported another panic over bed bugs in school classrooms. According to the article, "Researchers and public-

health officials fear that tiny, brown, blood-sucking bed-bugs are going to spread through schools."

Greg Kesterman, director of the environmental health division for Hamilton County Public Health (Cincinnati, OH, where bed bug problems are growing quickly) is quoted in the story as saying, "Anytime an insect has the potential to crawl on a person, and travel with (people), you're guaranteed that you'll see them showing up in a public facility." This is certainly

true. Bed bugs have, and will, show up in schools from time to time, especially as infestations in homes become more common.

The big question as I see it, is whether steps need to be taken to avoid a "large scale problem" in schools. Are bed bugs really another problem that schools need to be highly concerned about?

While you never want to underestimate nature's

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Keller ISD Uses Trap Guards™

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seven units and had them installed for \$700, including parts and labor. In addition to trap guards, the plumbing crew installed sink stoppers in all the sinks. In the first and second grade classrooms the sinks were used infrequently allowing the P-Traps to dry out thus allowing the roaches to crawl up out the drain. Adding the stoppers allows the P-Trap to stay moist and provides a barrier for roaches.

Within a week of installing the trap guards and sink stoppers Whitley Road Elementary saw a dramatic difference. The principal contacted Lane to thank him. "I've never had a principal call me for fixing a problem like this before, but she was so happy," he said. "We were able to solve the problem with no classroom disruption and we didn't have to put out a lot of chemical."

Another major component of this program was gaining the support of the principals. Lane and Gann make it a point to attend the monthly principal meetings, where they remind principals

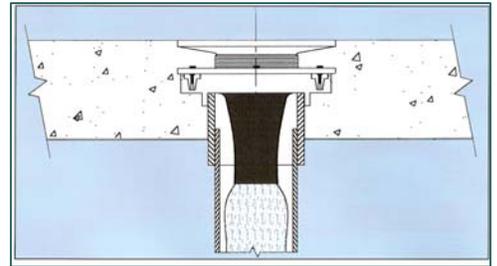


about food in the classroom and general sanitation issues. "Without their full support this would not have been successful," stated Lane.

Not only was Keller ISD impressed with the results, but so was their pest control provider. Their service technician couldn't wait to go back to his branch office and tell everyone there. They now plan to find these devices as well and to use them the next time they face a similar problem with other accounts.

Once Whitley Road was completed, Keller ISD started installing the Trap Guards in all their schools. To date they have been able to update four campuses and they are moving forward to make this a staple on all their campuses.

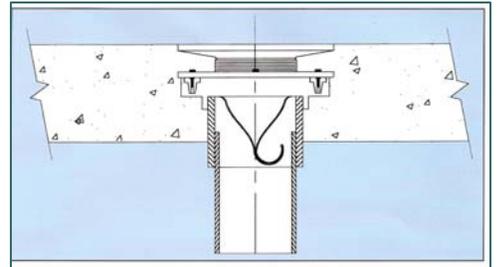
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Drawings complements of Trap Guard™

Above Shows device from side view as water/wastewater would go through the device.

Below Schematic displaying Trap Guard™ as it would appear when not in use.



Right: Trap Guard inside a kitchen drain, this unit had been installed for about one week



Will bed bugs become a problem in schools?

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ability to cause mischief, in my opinion the threat of bed bug infestations in schools should be minimal. Bed bugs are principally active in the dark (except in cases of heavy infestations--which would not be the case with the occasional, stealth introduction to a classroom). After dark they need a reliable source of blood to sustain a population and spread. Since people generally do not sleep in classrooms (with possible exception of short afternoon nap times in pre-school rooms), it would be tough going for a bed bug that slipped out of a backpack into a typical classroom from an infested home.

For most school classrooms or audi-

toriums there should be little risk of developing bed bug infestations significant enough to requiring treatment. Dorms are another issue of course. Although the risk of one or two bed bugs emerging from of a child's backpack and infesting other kid's belonging is conceivable, the risk is low. Should PMPs, school nurses and school pest management staff be able to recognize a bed bug and know something about its biology and behavior? Sure. Should schools fear they are going to spread through schools and cause a citizen panic? No way.

Cockroaches are far more likely to migrate from a child's backpack and find their version of "Southern Living" in a classroom. And backpack smuggling of cockroaches is

at best a minor or occasional source of cockroach infestations in school classrooms. If your experience is different, please let us know.

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