



A Healthy Start:

How School Health Corp. Designed a New Warehouse to Maximize Throughput and Order Fulfillment



Founded in 1957, School Health Corporation is a leading national provider of supplies and services to health professionals in educational settings from preschool to college. The company provides over 20,000 products including first aid kits, sports medicine equipment, and essentials to address a range of developmental issues. With a commitment to always put their valued customers first, it's no surprise that School Health grew and found themselves in need of a new warehouse.

The Challenge ▶

Maximizing the Layout of a New Warehouse

Growth meant it was time for a change, and that change was a need for a new, larger facility in suburban Chicago.

"While we are adept at warehouse operations and order fulfillment, our current team had never designed a warehouse from scratch before," said Beth Reed, School Health's project manager/training developer. Because of this, School Health needed guidance to ensure their proposed solution would actually solve their problems. ▶

"It takes more than educated guesswork and spreadsheets to properly slot product inventory," Reed said. "We wanted to do things right from the start, so we quickly recognized that we needed to bring in outside expertise."

Warehouse design and layout experts, Alpine Supply Chain Solutions, was selected for the challenge.

Main pain points to address included:

- How should the company slot product inventory for maximum efficiency and throughput?
- How best could they handle seasonal spikes in demand for certain products that typically occur at the start of each new school year?
- How should they number and label their bins for optimal performance with their existing warehouse management software?

With guidance from Alpine Supply Chain Solutions, School Health got started on establishing a warehouse location methodology and slotting plans.

Goals included :

- **Minimizing the time and distance required to replenish key products**
- **Reducing workers' bend-and-reach requirements for placing and picking products**
- **Efficiently organizing its inventory for greater throughput**

"The Alpine team asked great questions to understand our needs," Reed said, "and they have access to cutting-edge tools that were fundamental to the project's success."

Alpine knows you're only as good as the team you surround yourself with, and so they partnered with Optricity, a provider of software solutions for warehousing optimization, to analyze School Health's unique factors such as:

- Product dimensions
- Weight and velocity
- Pick paths
- Material handling equipment (conveyor system, pallet building, and inventory seasonality requirements).

With that information, Alpine able to design a facility that would not only meet School Health's current needs, but would grow with them for years to come.

The Outcome ▶

Efficiency is the name of the game, and by hiring Alpine Supply Chain Solutions, School Health was able to achieve just that. Their new facility delivered on all fronts; increasing throughput, meeting seasonal demand spikes, and improving labeling practices.

"In my role, I hadn't previously spent a lot of time thinking about warehouse location address methodology," Reed noted. "But working with Alpine made the entire project team appreciate the science involved in slotting our products. An optimally slotted warehouse supports efficiency and profitability. Just as important, it also minimizes the time and effort involved in key tasks like product putaway, picking and order fulfilment, which our employees appreciate."

With a more efficient workspace and a happy workforce, School Health can continue to be the provider that health professionals in an educational setting depend on. According to Reed, "Finding the right experts to work with was definitely a key to the success of this important project." We're glad Alpine was there to help.