



NEWS RELEASE

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Green Schools at the Top of the Agenda for U.S. Communities

(Washington, DC) April 22, 2008 – One school a day. That’s the rate America’s schools are registering for the U.S. Green Building Council’s (USGBC) LEED certification program for green schools, signaling their intent to build and operate schools that are more energy and water efficient, which will save taxpayers money. Green schools also have significantly improved indoor air quality, and that results in healthier kids.

“When you consider the fact that 50 million young people spend 8 hours a school day in a school building, we should do everything we can to make that environment work for them, not against them. Parents, teachers and school board officials understand better than anyone the link between child health and learning; and the fact is that children in green schools have fewer sick days and better test scores,” said Michelle Moore, Senior Vice President, USGBC.

“And if these reasons aren’t compelling enough to go green,” Moore continued, “the operational cost savings should be. If you do the math, energy savings alone could pay for 5,000 new textbooks per school per year.”

Moore noted that there are about 100,000 public and private schools in the U.S., and that fully one-third of their facility costs are in heating/cooling buildings, providing water, electricity, and other energy/utility functions.

“LEED buildings have a demonstrated track record for lowering energy use by up to 40% and reducing water use by up to 50% over conventional buildings,” Moore said. “Between climate change, skyrocketing energy prices, and growing concerns about water, building green schools and operating and maintaining them using green best practices should be a top priority in every community across the country.”

Moore notes that some communities have made the commitment. “Pennsylvania, Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon and Virginia have the most LEED certified schools to date, and many local school districts and state departments of education are beginning to develop and implement policies that require schools to be built green.”

The State of Ohio is one community that’s leading the way. Hundreds of new and renovated schools are set to meet higher energy efficiency and environmental standards through the Ohio School Facilities Commission’s adoption of the LEED for Schools Rating System as part of its school design standards. When the Commission did the math, it determined it could save \$1,415,529,914 in taxpayer money over the next 40 years by reducing the energy consumption of school buildings.

USGBC’s local Chapter network is leading the way to help replicate Ohio’s success in communities in all 50 states. Local “green school advocates” active in each of the organizations 77 Chapters and Affiliates are engaging school boards and PTA’s, and helping them to take the next steps towards committing to green schools.

The newly-formed Green Schools Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives has lent a federal voice to the green schools agenda. Created by co-chairs Rep. Darlene Hooley (D-Ore), Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas), and Rep. Jim Matheson (D-Utah), the goals of the caucus are to raise awareness of the benefits of green schools, lead the policy discussion on the topic in various forums, create legislative opportunities for the collective efforts of the caucus members, and provide members of Congress with constituent outreach resources.

“We need to green our schools within a generation,” concluded Moore. “Twenty percent of America goes to school every day: There’s no more important place to start.”

The LEED certification program was developed by USGBC for parents, teachers, school boards and communities as a tool to measure and manage their school buildings. For more information on green schools, visit USGBC’s green schools site: www.buildgreenschools.org.

To find green schools in your neighborhood:

http://www.buildgreenschools.org/leed/leed_schools_maps.html

About USGBC

The U.S. Green Building Council is a nonprofit membership organization whose vision is a sustainable built environment within a generation. Its membership includes corporations, builders, universities, government agencies, and other nonprofit organizations. Since USGBC’s founding in 1993, the Council has grown to more than 15,000 member companies and organizations, a comprehensive family of LEED® green building rating systems, an expansive educational offering, the industry’s popular Greenbuild International Conference and Expo (www.greenbuildexpo.org), and a network of 77 local chapters, affiliates, and organizing groups. For more information, visit www.usgbc.org.

About LEED® for Schools

The LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Schools green rating system delivers green building guidelines and third-party certification to assure schools’ stakeholders that their school incorporates best practices in green building with measurable results. LEED for Schools addresses classroom acoustics, master planning, mold prevention and environmental site assessment, together with the energy and water efficiencies and waste reduction strategies that are part of all LEED rating systems. The LEED for Schools rating system was launched by the U.S. Green Building Council in spring 2007. Since its launch, 78 schools have been LEED-certified, and more than 750 schools under construction have registered towards certification. For more information, visit <http://www.buildgreenschools.org>.