



Common Ground on Green Schools

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Earlier this year, USGBC launched seven new advocacy campaigns designed to highlight our organization’s public policy priorities. And local advocates sure have responded. Most recently, USGBC South Carolina hosted a day-long summit inspired by USGBC’s Common Ground on Green Schools Campaign which brought together Palmetto state educators, government officials and legislators to discuss ways to put every South Carolinian child in a green school within a generation. [Nate Allen](#), advocacy lead at the Center for Green Schools, wrote up a [blog](#) recapping this event.

Building Common Ground Around Green Schools in South Carolina

On Wednesday, May 1, the USGBC [South Carolina Chapter](#) hosted an event to strategize pathways to bring political common ground on green schools to the Palmetto State. The event was held in Columbia at the LEED Gold Thomas Cooper Library at the University of South Carolina, and featured approximately 75 attendees.

South Carolina State Senator Phil Leventis (D- Sumter), a longtime champion of green schools and member of the [50 for 50 Green Schools Caucus Initiative](#) National Advisory Council, keynoted the event, describing in detail the success he and his colleague SC State Representative Doug Brannon (R-Spartanburg) had witnessed this past November at the Green Schools Common Ground Summit in Warren County, Kentucky. Sen. Leventis, who is retiring after this legislative session, challenged his colleagues to work together on this critically important issue, saying “the example of bipartisanship that the Kentucky General Assembly has embraced need not be unique. We can do it here in South Carolina, and we’ve got the right factors in place to make it happen. Now more than ever, our students, teachers, staff and taxpayers deserve schools that promote learning while saving money.”

Following Senator Leventis’ remarks, Chuck Saylor, Past President of the National PTA and South Carolina resident, moderated a discussion about the specific communication points to utilize when promoting this message and how to approach lawmakers to ensure success. Saylor brought our message home saying, “every child in this state and every child in this country deserves a safe, healthy and technologically equal school where they can thrive.” Saylor called on Bill Knight, Director of Energy Management from Greenville County Schools, to present on the operational changes that have saved their school district approximately four million dollars. Knight outlined how the changes they’ve made can be implemented in any school district, and then discussed the value of real-time cost savings data in conversations about the importance of green schools.

At the end of the day, members of the USGBC-SC Chapter met to plan how they will engage legislators in their home districts on [Green Apple Day of Service](#) this Sept. 29. Kudos to USGBC-SC Executive Director Melissa Le Roy and the incredible group of volunteers who were integral to the success of this event.



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