Congressional Green Schools Caucus Hosts Green Schools Leaders

Published on **11 Jul 2011** | Written by **Nathaniel Allen** | Posted in **Advocacy and policy**

Representatives Ben Chandler (KY-6), Robert Dold (IL-10) and Jim Matheson (UT-2), the co-chairs of the bi-partisan Congressional Green Schools Caucus, sponsored a briefing on Monday, July 11, to educate their colleagues on the significant financial savings greening our nation's schools can have for school district budgets and the taxpayers who fund them. (Read Congressman Dold's press release on the briefing.) With presentations from a panel of industry experts, attendees heard first-hand about how the green schools movement has become mainstream in construction and renovation practices, and moreover, how energy efficient technologies can save schools money and improve learning conditions.

- Judy Marks, Executive Director, National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (NCEF), introduced the components of a green school, and provided an overview of the current federal and state landscape for healthy, high-performing educational facilities. Marks also discussed NCEF's involvement in the Coalition for Green Schools Executive Committee, and the power of uniting organizations to advance this movement together.

- Andy Olivastro, Manager, Community Affairs, United Technologies Corp (UTC), highlighted the leadership role of the private sector, and specifically how UTC is furthering its longstanding commitment to sustainable practices and education with its sponsorship of the Center for Green Schools at USGBC. Olivastro also provided examples from UTC companies of energy efficient technologies saving schools money on operation costs, as well as improving learning environments, including Okeechobee High School in Okeechobee, FL, which is saving 40 percent on its energy costs after installing a quieter, high efficiency rooftop air conditioning unit from Carrier, among other upgrades.

- Susan Castellan, Sr. Project Manager, Whiting-Turner Contracting Co., described the changes she has witnessed during her twenty-plus year career in the construction industry, and how green practices have shifted from being foreign to common on construction sites. Castellan connected these new practices with the current green jobs movement, and then provided a detailed overview of the cost-savings technologies installed at the LEED Gold Stoddert Elementary in Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, one member of the Congressional Green Schools Caucus spent time today seeing green building technology in action --Rep. Chris Van Hollen (MD-8), visited the LEED Gold Camille Kendall Academic Center at the Universities of Shady Grove.

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