A Plan to Green Every School in Illinois: LEED Task Force Report

Published on **4 Apr 2011** | Written by **Nathaniel Allen** | Posted in **Advocacy and policy**

The U.S. Green Building Council-Illinois Chapter held a reception this past week in Springfield, Ill. to mark the release of a comprehensive report identifying opportunities to green all schools in Illinois. The report was the result of more than two years of collaboration between the USGBC-Illinois Chapter, civic and corporate partners, and was commissioned as a result of the October 2009 adoption of House Joint Resolution 45 by the Illinois General Assembly.

Introduced by State Representative Karen May (who has since become Chair of the National Advisory Council of the 50 for 50 Green Schools Caucus Initiative - See my previous blog entry to read about how other state legislators are advancing green schools), HJR 45 was adopted to pursue a statewide campaign to transform existing Illinois public schools and meet the goal of every student attending a green school within a generation.

To achieve this goal, HJR 45 created the HJR 45 LEED Task Force, with the following responsibilities: 1) Advise USGBC-Illinois on a pilot program to assist three underserved Illinois schools in achieving LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance certification, 2) assess how this pilot program can influence broader policies on greening existing schools in Illinois, and 3) author a report on the state of sustainability in Illinois schools that includes recommendations for programs and financial mechanisms that can foster sustainability on a larger scale in schools across the state.

The reception was held in conjunction with a USGBC-Illinois Chapter event in which green building advocates from the Chapter participated in two days of sessions at the state Capitol. During this time they met with approximately 50 Illinois Lawmakers or their aides and provided the report to help guide future activity. After the reception Doug Widener, Executive Director of the USGBC–Illinois Chapter, met with Representative May and a select group of state lawmakers about plans to accelerate the work of the already active Illinois Working Group on Green Schools.

"We're so proud of the collaboration that took place in order to make this report a reality," Doug reported after the reception. "I'm confident Illinois students will benefit from our work, and our hope is that these findings can be replicated in other states."

Click here for more information and to view the report.

Nathaniel Allen
U.S. Green Building Council

Member employees, USGBC staff

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