

# Across the Country, Legislators and Their Constituents Actively Support Green Schools

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Since the start of the new year, legislators at all levels of government from across the country have been busy attending and hosting big events to advance green schools. State legislators in the [50 for 50 Green Schools Caucus Initiative](#) have been particularly active. Here are the highlights:

- In **South Carolina**, State Senators John Courson and Phil Leventis worked with the Conservation Voters of South Carolina and their local USGBC Chapter to host a briefing titled "Creating Jobs through Conservation," featuring testimony about the success of green school initiatives in the Palmetto State and nationwide as an agenda item for the year ahead. Senator Leventis, a member of the bipartisan National Advisory Council for the 50 for 50 Green Schools Caucus Initiative, spoke about the importance of green schools to the health and productivity of our students and ultimately our nation's economic prosperity. After the briefing, the Senator commented: "We have an opportunity right now to promote jobs in South Carolina by retrofitting and building green schools that will save our taxpayers money and ultimately help improve our education system."
- Meanwhile, the **Kentucky** USGBC Chapter Advocacy Committee spent a day meeting with more than 30 legislators, laying the groundwork and establishing connections to support and enhance the Commonwealth's existing leadership around green schools. As the House of Representatives was called into session last Tuesday afternoon, Representative Mary Lou Marzian, co-chair of the [Kentucky Green Schools Caucus](#), arranged for the entire team of USGBC advocates to be recognized on the House floor. Later that evening, six legislators joined the chapter volunteers on a hybrid bus tour to visit a local high-performing school.
- In **North Carolina**, over 30 USGBC Chapter volunteers had a full day of meetings with members of the North Carolina legislature, using the opportunity to promote dialogue between legislators in the Tar Heel State about power of green schools.
- Following the success of a green schools summit held in the state this past fall, **Nebraska** State Senator Ken Haar hosted a green schools curriculum summit, convening education stakeholders to discuss a plan to incorporate environmental literacy into the education of all children in Nebraska.
- Approximately 40 USGBC Chapter volunteers in **Texas** convened at the Capitol for a day of advocacy, meeting with approximately 100 different members of the legislature. In an evening reception, Rep. Eddie Lucio III, Chair of the Texas Green Schools Caucus, highlighted the many green schools efforts in the Lone Star State and outlined the importance of increasing dialogue among his colleagues in the legislature.

The personal and professional connections made by these leading lawmakers and USGBC chapter volunteers in support of green schools exemplify the growing success of one of USGBC's most treasured goals: Green schools for all children within this generation. In many ways, the most effective advocacy for this key issue is about facilitating connections – between lawmakers, their constituents, and the many resources that can aid them in advancing green schools.

Across the country, the success of these groups can be seen at all levels of government. On the same day as the "Creating Jobs through Conservation" briefing in South Carolina, **Arkansas** Senator Mark Pryor [toured a green school](#) in his home state with constituents after being invited as follow up from USGBC's [Congressional Advocacy Day](#) in Washington. On the federal stage, the bipartisan [Congressional Green Schools Caucus](#) will continue its momentum into the 112th Congress to educate and inform federal lawmakers about the enormous impact of greening our nation's schools.

At the local level, **Sacramento** Mayor Kevin Johnson, a member of the [Mayors' Alliance for Green Schools](#), prioritized green schools as a key strategy to move Sacramento forward in his [State of the City Address](#). Mayor Johnson remarked, "Second, we want to "green" our schools. Over the next 10 years we'll retrofit 15 million square feet of school facilities to meet LEED standards for green buildings. We can pay for it by raising \$100M from the County treasuries across the region. Schools will spend less money on energy costs. This savings will potentially free up dollars to pay off the loan and protect teacher positions." Mayor Johnson welcomed USGBC's Center for Green Schools Director Rachel Gutter to speak at [Greenwise Sacramento](#), an event highlighting an ongoing initiative to transform Sacramento into the greenest city in the country. During her address, Rachel Gutter announced the Sacramento City Unified School District as a recipient of a [2011 Center for Green Schools Fellowship](#).

To get involved in the national green schools movement, and for additional information and resources, visit [www.centerforgreenschools.org](http://www.centerforgreenschools.org).

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