



Green Schools National Conference: A National Movement has Arrived

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U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan will kick off the [Green Schools National Conference](#) (GSNC), a gathering of K-12 school administrators, teachers, students and parents this month, focused on the greening of the nation's schools.

The GSNC, set for Feb. 27-29 in Denver and sponsored by the Green Schools National Network (GSNN), will provide Secretary Duncan with the opportunity to spotlight U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Awards Program.

This is the inaugural year of the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools Program, which recognizes schools for reducing environmental impact on their communities, promoting healthy school environments for their own students and staff and offering high-quality environmental education. This conference will serve as a comprehensive introduction to the program for districts and schools interested in applying for the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon designation.

The award aims to encourage energy and resource conservation measures that can lead to cost savings and job creation; environmental and behavioral changes to promote health and productivity among students, staff and other occupants; and the use of environmental and sustainability education to support students' preparedness for some of the nation's fastest growing employment sectors. Many breakout sessions focus on facilities design and management.

Here is a sampling of some of those sessions, including three USGBC-supported sessions (indicated with an asterisk):

- *Becoming a Green School Division A Blueprint to a Sustainable Future
- *The Places We Eat: Leveraging the Power of Design to Transform Childhood Wellness
- *Department of Education - Green Ribbon Schools Awards
- High Performance Design across a District with Learning at the Center
- LEED Certification - Is it For Your School District?
- The Next Frontier: Existing School Renovations In a Green Climate
- Benchmarking The Benefits of Green Schools: Beyond the Triple Bottom Line!
- Nonlinear Project Funding: Getting There Without Campaigns, Tuition or Referenda

The growing green schools movement has created demand throughout the country for funding projects large and small. The pre-conference workshop, "Funding Resources for Green School Construction: Energy Efficient Retrofit, Remodel/Expansion and/or New Construction," will provide the tools and techniques to secure funds. This full-day workshop is scheduled for Feb. 27.

The national gathering won't be merely a pep rally celebrating all things green. It will include "Solutions Summits" that will bring key players together to define and set goals for future action. "This 'take action' approach is a major departure from the typical one-way information sharing that occurs at most conferences," Green Schools National Network Director Jim McGrath points out. One of the five Solutions Summits focuses on financing options for green school buildings.

Be sure to [register](#) for the 2012 GSNC online- and as a benefit of being a Center for Green Schools blog reader, you can take advantage of the special USGBC discount code.

1. Go to http://www.greenschoolsnationalconference.org/register_now.php
2. Scroll down and click on Register Online
3. Click on Affiliate Rates
4. When asked for a discount code, enter usgbcschools

If you are registering more than five people from the same organization, call Conference Registration Services at 1-800-280-6218 to facilitate the registration process.

For conference updates, join the [email list](#) or follow 2012 GSNC on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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