A Shining Example from the Sunshine State

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CEQ Chair Nancy Sutley joined Mayor Jeri Muoio in West Palm Beach to tour Northboro Elementary School – a recently modernized LEED Gold certified school that's gaining attention as a model for smart investment in sustainability. Northboro is a great example of how investing in modernization helps schools direct money to their classrooms instead of their energy bills. The elementary school has saved more than 16 percent in energy costs -- enough to pay for at least one teacher each year -- through upgrades including advanced lighting and ventilation systems.

Schools spend more than $6 billion annually on their energy bills -- more than they spend on computers and textbooks combined. The average public school building in the United States is more than 40 years old, and many struggle with old, inefficient, or broken heating and cooling systems and a host of other challenges, from crumbling roofs to outdated textbooks. As the President said: "We can't expect American kids to do their best in places that are falling apart. This is America. Every kid deserves a great school -- and we can give it to them." That's why, in the American Jobs Act, the President proposed a $25 billion investment in school infrastructure to modernize at least 35,000 public schools across the country. The funds would provide for a range of emergency repair and renovation projects, energy efficiency upgrades, asbestos abatement and removal, new science and computer labs, and internet-ready classrooms – and put 16,000 Americans back to work making those upgrades.

Modernizing our schools makes sense for American students, and makes sense for schools' bottom lines. Northboro Elementary is a clear example of how this investment would create jobs, improve classrooms, and bring our schools into the 21st century.

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