



Local Officials Gather to Find Common Ground on Green Schools

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Yesterday, state legislators, key decision makers and USGBC chapter members from across the South and Midwest convened at [Richardsville Elementary School](#) in Kentucky, the nation's first net-zero energy school, for a "Common Ground" event to discuss the success of the green schools movement in the region and the best practices that can be applied to their own communities.

This regional roundtable discussion will be part of a larger series in 2012 launched by the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council to bring local elected officials from across the political spectrum together to explore the common ground that exists around the important topic of green schools.

Yesterday's event started off with a tour of the school led by students, to show off some of the many features Richardsville Elementary has that makes them energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly. Richardsville was constructed at comparable cost to other elementary schools within the school district. To date, the green schools movement in Warren County has saved more than 6 million dollars, enough money to preserve more than 160 teacher positions.

Students showed us features of the school such as a screen tracking real-time energy usage, a recycling hallway, solar features, their geothermal system and the infamous "combi oven," which uses steam to cook foods, while at the same time reducing the cost of heating the kitchen. Their tour ended in the cafeteria, where legislators were invited to join students and eat lunch featuring some local produce.

Participants spent the rest of the afternoon discussing how other states across the country can adopt policies and practices similar to Kentucky that create high-performing school buildings. Each attendee talked about their key take-aways from the day, and what they will do moving forward to make green schools a reality in their state. The event in Kentucky has been a huge success, and we hope that the roundtable discussions moving forward will be beneficial to other parts of the country to further this important movement.

What do you think of this initiative? Would you like to see legislators in your state come together to discuss green schools?



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