# President Obama Announces $25 Billion For Improving Schools

Published on **9 Sep 2011** | Written by **Rachel Gutter** | Posted in **Center for Green Schools**

Last night, President Obama made a monumental announcement – his proposed American Jobs Act will provide $25 billion for school construction and modernize over 35,000 school buildings. If this bill is passed, it would not only put thousands of teachers back to work, it would allow us to make desperately needed improvements in schools across the country, including energy-efficiency upgrades and comprehensive, green retrofits. This is a huge step forward toward enhancing school conditions for students across America and reaching the Center for Green Schools' goal of providing green schools for everyone within this generation

"The American Jobs Act will repair and modernize at least 35,000 schools. It will put people to work right now fixing roofs and windows, installing science labs and high-speed Internet in classrooms all across this country," said President Obama. "Pass this jobs bill, and thousands of teachers in every state will go back to work. These are the men and women charged with preparing our children for a world where the competition has never been tougher. But while they're adding teachers in places like South Korea, we're laying them off in droves. It's unfair to our kids. It undermines their future and ours. And it has to stop. Pass this bill, and put our teachers back in the classroom where they belong."

In addition to this excellent news, the Department of Education announced earlier this week that the Green Ribbon Schools award criteria is now open for public comment. This program celebrates K-12 schools that best exemplify America's transition to a sustainable economy and demonstrate environmental literacy.

When it comes to our children's future, education is a key factor in their ability to succeed in our ever-changing world. Yet millions of students are forced to attend school in buildings laden with problems. Leaky roofs, asbestos, poor air quality and limited access to daylight are just some of the subpar conditions students struggle to learn in spite of. School districts across the country are awaiting funding to tackle billions of dollars in deferred maintenance for critical upgrades to their facilities. Passing this bill would create an unprecedented opportunity to improve the educational experience and demonstrate the impact that high-performing schools have on the health and well-being of our children. We cannot educate 21st century leaders in 19th century classrooms.

Our schools should enhance a student's ability to learn, not compromise it. Between President Obama's announcement, and the Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools award, I truly believe that we have reached a tipping point in the green schools movement.

Read USGBC's press release
Read a fact sheet on the American Jobs Act

Read our post on Kiwi Magazine

Read our post on Parenting Magazine

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