



DC's Woodrow Wilson High School Celebrates New Green Campus

Published on 1 Sep 2011 | Written by [Mona Kamdjou](#) | Posted in [Center for Green Schools](#)

Celebrating their 75th anniversary, Wilson High School recently went through a makeover. In an effort to promote a healthy learning environment, the school administration decided to put work into school improvements for a greener school building. The campus now utilizes energy efficient technology, large windows for natural light and acoustic paneling to accommodate the Tiger's musical talent.

On Thursday, Aug. 18, the [Wilson High School Tigers](#) celebrated their brand new green campus with a ribbon cutting ceremony. In attendance was [Mayor Vincent Gray](#), DC Public Schools (DCPS) [Chancellor Kaya Henderson](#), DC City Council members, school district officials and proud students and parents, not to mention a handful of USGBC supporters (including our very own Wilson alumnus [Nathaniel Allen!](#))

DC Mayor Vincent Gray and other city and school officials cut the ribbon at Wilson High School's new green campus last month. Photo taken by Tracy Koczela.

After spending an academic year in temporary space at the University of the District of Columbia, the \$115 million renovation welcomed elated students on the first day of school last week. Students expressed how much healthier the building felt, how great the natural light is and how the center of their school is no longer a dark and avoided area but a showpiece.



The high school is eagerly awaiting [LEED for Schools](#) (v. 2009) certification, with the hope of earning gold. To help achieve this, my fellow summer associate Mike Wong and I worked closely with Wilson's project team and administrators to promote the school as a teaching tool. With input from the architects and school leaders, we created a guidebook for students to use for tours of their new campus. 35 student volunteers became "green LEEDers" and educated over 2,000 Wilson Tigers on the ins-and-outs of all the sustainable features that went into their new home.

The state-of-the-art auditorium holds 850 people, and will serve as a great resource to the bustling neighborhood shared by residents, businesses and American University. The project team incorporated the seats from the school's original theater, built in 1935, which were refurbished and now look brand new. The gymnasium can hold the entire school (more than 1,600 people). Other highlights include a greenhouse, green roof, solar panels and a 15,000 gallon cistern that will support 55 water closets and 18 urinals.

Mother Nature also celebrated the school and inaugurated it with an earthquake and a hurricane here in DC last week. Luckily, Wilson has a 30,000-gallon storm water tank in place to help manage runoff from the site.

Alex Wilson, the school's director of academic development, has long been a supporter of the new building and its green goals and accomplishments. "LEED is not only the right thing to do, but the lighting, acoustics and blending of old and new materials created the unanimous reaction - this campus is amazing," he told visitors during the schools ribbon cutting.

Congratulations Wilson Tigers!


Mona Kamdjou


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