

Ohio School Facilities Commission Members get update on Green School Efforts

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Pennsylvania or Texas? Though those three are certainly out in front, you might be surprised to learn that the leader of the pack is Ohio. Last month I had the opportunity to provide the seven-member [Ohio School Facilities Commission](#) (OSFC) – the body that oversees the public school building efforts in our state - with an update on the status of our [Green Schools Program](#). The highlight of the update was that Ohio has more LEED projects than any other state, with 297 registered or certified schools. Through the various programs offered by the OSFC, we have registered an average of 65 school buildings a year since an [executive order](#) was passed in 2007. I am encouraged to see most project teams surpassing the state’s minimum requirement of Silver certification, with more striving for Gold and some school districts even going for Platinum.

Educating local school district boards, administrators, teachers and communities is the key to the success of the state’s program. In addition to the known benefits of green schools, studies show schools designed using the practices inherent in the LEED rating system have the potential to save significant operating and maintenance costs. I was pleased to report to the Commission that these savings will not only benefit the school districts, they will also ultimately benefit all of the taxpayers of Ohio throughout the life of the new or renovated schools.

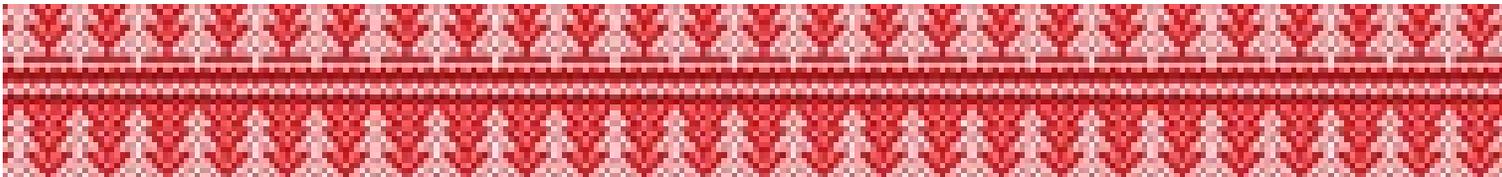
Starting this year, we’ll be able to track these potential cost savings better than ever. This summer the [USGBC Central Ohio Chapter](#) successfully secured a 2011 USGBC Green Schools Innovation Grant to fund an intern to assist in harvesting the wealth of green schools data that is being accumulated by these projects. The intern will look at cost information for green schools as it compares to non-green schools, as well as strive to document health benefits associated with sustainable schools. As the certifications are now starting to come on-line, we are very excited to start laying the groundwork for documenting the cost and performance of these schools. Stay tuned and look for those results next summer!

Lisa Laney, OSFC's Green Schools Program Director, has been with the Commission since 1999. When she's not traveling all over the Buckeye State providing support to hundreds of public school construction projects, Lisa actively volunteers in the USGBC Central Ohio Chapter's Green Schools Committee.

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