

State Legislatures Sow Seeds of Opportunity for Healthy, High-Performing Schools

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The Kentucky State Capitol. Photo credit: DSLewis via Flickr.

Since the beginning of 2013, the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council has followed more than 90 bills across 30 states that seek to advance healthy, high-performing schools. This number is up even from last year, and continues to validate what our movement has long understood – that there’s a lot of common ground around the potential that healthy, high-performing schools provide (see our [related advocacy campaign](#)).

USGBC’s state activity report for 2012 counted almost 90 new laws that advance green building ([see blog and report](#)). At least 28 of last year’s policy advancements stand to benefit students, teachers and communities through measures that promote green schools (see 2012 mid-session [summary](#) on schools), and already a few of the 2013 bills have already been signed into law. Here are a few highlights:

- **Kentucky.** Rep. Rita Smart introduced a resolution to promote the benefits of green schools across the state, and to pledge support for a goal of building or renovating at least one green school in each of Commonwealth’s 120 counties by 2030. Thanks in part to enthusiastic support from USGBC-Kentucky, Rep. Smart’s [HR 0069](#) was adopted by voice vote on March 4, 2013.
- **Georgia.** Rep. Karla Drenner introduced a resolution with her colleagues Reps. Henson and Kaiser to encourage statewide participation in the [Green Apple Day of Service](#). [HR 0704](#) was adopted on the same day it was introduced – March 12, 2013.
- **Maryland.** The Baltimore City Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly co-sponsored companion House and Senate bills that would allocate approximately \$1 billion in investment in new and modernized school buildings. Leadership commitments by the city and state to build green schools means that these funds will further expand access to healthy, efficient and productive learning environments. Both [HB 860](#) and [SB 743](#) have passed their chambers of origin and the House bill has passed both chambers, has been concurred and enrolled. The measure awaits action by the Governor.

As we release this [2013 mid-session summary of green schools activity](#), we’re optimistic that these seeds of change can yield some important outcomes by year’s end. We’re excited to host a number of the champion lawmakers listed in this document at an upcoming summit where they can compare notes and share ideas from around the country on what states can do to proliferate the benefits of green schools. Like our [2010 summit](#) and regional events in [PA](#), [SC](#), [KY](#) and beyond, this year’s event will reinforce our enthusiasm for bipartisan efforts that align behind this cause.

Please note that this mid-session summary is by no means comprehensive. We will release an update later this year to highlight what we hope will be many more successes. With the help of public policy levers, we can accelerate the realization of our vision that all people will learn in a green school within this generation.

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