

State legislators convene in D.C. to support green school efforts

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Written by **Nathaniel Allen**

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On June 3-4, nearly 30 state legislators traveled to Washington, D.C. for the 2013 Green Schools State Legislative Summit. Hosted by the Center for Green Schools at USGBC, the workshop brought together lawmakers and critical stakeholders from the education sector for two days of idea generation, best-practice sharing and communications training to advance the benefits of healthy, high-performing schools in communities across the country. The attending legislators are among the network that have led debates on [more than 90 bills](#) related to healthy, high-performing schools in state legislatures in 2013.



The summit featured discussion-based breakout sessions with policy experts about promoting school energy efficiency, financing green school construction and modernization, state-level school infrastructure planning and school health and wellness priorities. The lawmakers also participated in communications and media trainings from Judith Webb, USGBC's senior vice president of Marketing & Strategy, and received an update on the LEED green building rating system from Scot Horst, USGBC's senior vice president of LEED. Additional thought leaders led trainings about connecting with local volunteers through USGBC chapters and engaging the evangelical community for support.

On the evening of June 3, the lawmakers attended a reception hosted by the Center for Green Schools to honor the 2013 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools awardees. The reception brought together members of Congress and executives from educational and environmental organizations. A short program was moderated by the Center's Director Rachel Gutter and featured congratulatory remarks by:

- Dennis Van Roekel, President, National Education Association
- Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers
- Dan Domenech, Executive Director, AASA, the School Superintendents Association
- John Mandyck, Chief Sustainability Officer, UTC Climate, Controls & Security Systems
- Rick Fedrizzi, President, CEO & Founding Chair, USGBC

On the morning of June 4, the legislators joined the [Center for Green Schools Advisory Board](#) for a breakfast on Capitol Hill, hosted by Rep. Alan Lowenthal (CA-47), a former state lawmaker and participant in our 2011 state legislative summit. Rep. Lowenthal provided a briefing on federal initiatives to support green schools, and began a dialogue that also featured Rep. Jim Matheson (UT-4), the chair of the Congressional Green Schools Caucus, as well as staff working directly on federal energy efficiency and schools legislation for their bosses, New Hampshire Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, Ohio Sen. Rob Portman and Colorado Sen. Mark Udall. The state legislators also met with U.S. Department of Education officials for information about ED's new [School Facilities Best Practice Tour](#) and how it may draw attention to schools in their communities.

After the summit ended, several of the participants sat down with their members of Congress to inform them about the green schools movement in their states. State Senator Andy Kerr visited with U.S. Sen. Mark Udall to share exciting news from their home state of Colorado – that same morning Governor Hickenlooper was signing into law [CO SB 279](#), a green schools bill championed by Sen. Kerr. Meanwhile, Kentucky State Rep. Jim DeCesare spent the day meeting with members of the Kentucky delegation, including U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, who later publicized his visit through social media.

[View more photos from the event >](#)



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