



## LEED for Schools

### What is LEED for Schools?

The LEED for Schools Rating System recognizes the unique nature of the design and construction of K-12 schools. Based on LEED for New Construction, it addresses issues such as classroom acoustics, master planning, mold prevention, and environmental site assessment. By addressing the uniqueness of school spaces and children's health issues, LEED for Schools provides a unique, comprehensive tool for schools that wish to build green and achieve measurable results. LEED for Schools is the recognized third-party benchmark for high-performance schools that are healthy for students, comfortable for teachers, and cost-effective for budgets.

### What makes schools different from other building types?

- **Children's health issues:** Schools play the crucial role of providing healthy, safe environments for children to learn. Because children breathe more air in proportion to their bodies than adults, environments for children must be carefully designed to minimize indoor pollutant exposure.
- **Educational mission:** As learning environments, schools can demonstrate the importance of efficiency and conservation. LEED for Schools offers an opportunity to integrate environmental issues into the curriculum, allowing the built environment to become an interactive teaching tool.
- **Complex programmatic spaces:** Schools combine many functions into a relatively small space; from classrooms to gymnasiums, cafeterias to machine shops, the job of school designers is particularly complex. LEED for Schools gives project teams guidance on the specific needs of unique space types.

### How does LEED for Schools work?

Intended for use in the design and construction phases of a building, LEED for Schools facilitates and encourages project teams to use an integrated design approach from start to finish, bringing down overall costs and delivering project goals. Using this integrated approach, LEED promotes improved practices in:

1. Site selection and development.
2. Water and energy use.
3. Environmentally preferred materials, finishes, and furnishings.
4. Waste stream management.
5. Indoor air quality and occupant comfort.
6. Innovation in sustainable design and construction.

To become certified, projects must meet all prerequisites and a minimum number of points within the six areas listed above. The number of points the project earns, determines the level of LEED certification the project receives.

### Can I use LEED for New Construction to certify my school project?

If you are a K-12 educational building undergoing either major renovations or building new, you will need to use LEED for Schools. This is because LEED for Schools is more appropriate for these spaces than LEED for New Construction, especially because of LEED for Schools places an emphasis on children's health. Other projects, such as college or university academic buildings, K-12 athletic facilities, or interpretive centers are also eligible to use LEED for Schools.

### Can existing schools become LEED certified even if they are not undergoing major renovations?

Existing schools can certify using the new LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Rating System. LEED for Existing Buildings: O&M is the revised tool for the ongoing operations and maintenance of existing buildings. The certification system identifies and rewards, current best

practices and provides an outline for building's to use less energy, water and natural resources; improve the indoor environment; and uncover operating inefficiencies. It can be applied both to existing schools seeking LEED certification for the first time and to projects previously certified under LEED for Schools or LEED for New Construction.

### **How can I convince the school in my community to build for LEED certification?**

The U.S. Green Building Council has a number of resources to help you make the case to your school or school district. At [BuildGreenSchools.org](http://BuildGreenSchools.org), you can find facts on green schools, project profiles and valuable tools and resources that make the case for green schools. While there, you can check out our Press Kit for Green Schools, which includes fact sheets with talking points on LEED for Schools and the benefits of green schools. Also, encourage administrators to check out the free online tutorial, Introduction to LEED for Schools, which covers the basics of green design in schools, including sections on financing, case studies, and more. This course is available at [Greenbuild365.org](http://Greenbuild365.org). Green building professionals can help schools understand the process of building green with LEED; visit [BuildGreenSchools.org](http://BuildGreenSchools.org) to contact your local chapter's Green Schools Committee.

### **How do I register my project?**

Project registration is the first step toward earning LEED certification for your building and is best done at the project outset. Once you register, you will have access to LEED-Online and the LEED credit interpretation database. USGBC encourages you to keep your project profile up-to-date in LEED-Online. LEED-Online provides your team with an interactive project management tool, and the information you supply will help us track your project, answer credit interpretation requests, and prepare project case studies upon certification. Aggregate data for all registered projects will be used to expand the growing knowledge base of green building operations costs and trends.

### **How much does it cost to certify a project?**

The average cost to register and certify a new facility is \$5,500 for new schools and \$3,500 for existing schools.

### **Where can I get an updated copy of the LEED for Schools Rating System?**

The LEED for Schools rating system is located within the Green Building Design & Construction reference guide and is available for purchase from the USGBC Web site.

### **Where can I learn more about LEED for Schools?**

USGBC has a variety of resources for you to get started:

- **Visit [www.USGBC.org](http://www.USGBC.org):** There, you can learn more about LEED rating systems, download case studies, and more.
- **Visit [www.BuildGreen Schools.org](http://www.BuildGreenSchools.org):** Learn more about the benefits of green schools, find out which schools around the country are already going green, and take advantage of research and resources for educating yourself and your community about healthy, sustainable, green schools.
- **Take the Introduction to LEED for Schools at [www.Greenbuild365.org](http://www.Greenbuild365.org):** This quick online tutorial is a great introduction to green schools and LEED. Community members, administrators, and others can use this to learn about the benefits of green schools and how they can get one in their community.
- **Attend a LEED workshop:** LEED workshops provide a detailed exploration of the rating system, case studies, and effective strategies for designing, building and operating a green school. Visit [www.Greenbuild365.org](http://www.Greenbuild365.org).
- **Purchase a Green Building Design & Construction reference guide:** This is the user's manual for teams that wish to pursue LEED certification. It contains supporting resources, calculation methodologies, approach and implementation strategies, and more. E-book reference guides are available for \$140 and hard-copy guides are \$150 for members and are available for purchase from the USGBC Web site.

- **Become a member:** Encourage your company to join USGBC. USGBC members are not only recognized leaders in supporting a better built environment; member company employees have access to USGBC resources, can participate in committees and member circles, and enjoy a wide array of discounts on USGBC publications, programs, and services. Visit [www.USGBC.org/membership](http://www.USGBC.org/membership).
- **Get involved with your local chapter:** USGBC chapters routinely host informative presentations and are a great way to connect with other professionals in your region who have experience implementing LEED. Visit [www.USGBC.org/chapters](http://www.USGBC.org/chapters).
- **Contact USGBC:** For questions related to LEED for Schools, e-mail [schools@committees.usgbc.org](mailto:schools@committees.usgbc.org) or call 202-742-3780.