



1800 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
T: 202 828-7422
F: 202 828-5110
www.usgbc.org

FACT SHEET

Green Schools Facts: Benefits of Green Schools

It is a fact that 20% of America goes to school every day. School buildings represent the largest construction sector in the United States – \$80 billion in 2006-2008. Buildings overall are also responsible for nearly 40% of carbon dioxide emissions in the United States, a major contributor to global warming. By promoting the design and construction of green schools, we can make a tremendous impact on student health, school operational costs, test scores and the environment.

According to "[Greening America's Schools: Costs and Benefits 2006](#)," it costs on average less than 2%, or about \$3 per square foot, more to build a green school than to build a conventional school – and the payback occurs within one year based on energy savings alone. Green schools are environmentally sound and provide measurable benefits that impact the occupants of the building and the financial bottom line.

The green school itself also serves as a teaching tool – demonstrating to students, faculty, and parents practical ways that we can turn back the clock on global warming while creating healthier, more efficient, less costly learning environments.

Financial Benefits

- Building green offers dramatic reductions in operations and maintenance costs.
- Green schools can save \$100,000 per year – enough to hire two new teachers, buy 150 new computers, or purchase 5,000 new textbooks.
- It costs less than 2% more to build a green school than to build a conventional school – and that the financial benefits are 20 times as large.
- If all new school construction and school renovations went green starting today, energy savings alone would total \$20 billion over the next 10 years. When you factor in water savings, the economic savings are enormous.

Environmental Benefits

- LEED-certified green buildings are designed to use energy and water in a significantly, measurably more efficient way than conventionally designed buildings.
- LEED buildings also reduce their waste streams during construction, are built to minimize their impact on the land on which they sit and the ecosystems around them, and are built with sustainably produced, recycled and recyclable materials and products.



Student, Teacher and Societal Benefits

- Green schools are built and designed with strategies and technologies that aim to improve the quality of indoor air, which could lead to improved student health, test scores and faculty retention.
- Green schools have better lighting, temperature control, improved ventilation and better indoor air quality.
- Greening all school construction is estimated to create more than 2,000 new jobs each year from increased use of energy efficiency technologies.

Sources:

Greening America's Schools: Costs and Benefits by Greg Kats, 2006
Turner Green Building Survey, 2005