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### **Center for Green Schools at USGBC Announces Best of Green Schools 2012 List**

*Recipients demonstrate innovative approaches to school sustainability, recognized for commitment to healthy, high-performing schools*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jan. 16, 2013) –The Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council today announced its second annual “Best of Green Schools” list, which recognizes top educational institutions and individuals across the country for embracing environmental initiatives.

"Year after year we continue to be blown away by the ingenuity and innovation of communities across the country and around the world," said Rachel Gutter, director of the Center for Green Schools at USGBC. "In these challenging economic times, we've seen an impressive commitment on the part of schools, communities and leaders to make the places where our children learn healthy and safe, while putting money back into the classrooms where it belongs."

The Best of Green Schools 2012 list highlights schools, districts, individuals and communities working toward the common goal of healthy, high-performing learning places for all. The Best of Green Schools 2012 list recognizes the hard work being done across the country and honors the heroes and shining examples of our movement.

The recipients of the Best of Green Schools 2012 include:

- **K-12 School(s)** – *Manzo Elementary (Tuscon, Ariz.) & Bertschi Science Wing (Seattle, Wash.):* The Reconciliation Ecology Project at Manzo Elementary is transforming lives and communities through the promotion of stewardship, healthy choices and innovation in learning and educational facilities. Seattle's Bertschi School Living Science building is the first project in the world built to the Living Building Challenge (LBC) v2.0 standards and in an urban setting.
- **2-Year Higher Education Institution** – *Johnson County Community College (Overland Park, Kan.):* In just four years, JCCC has become a signatory to the ACUPCC and is providing regional and national leadership on sustainability issues.
- **4-Year Higher Education Institution** – *Oberlin College (Oberlin, Ohio):* Through innovative curriculum, research and work opportunities, and educational events and programming, Oberlin College aims to engage all members of its community in sustainability issues.
- **School District** – *Virginia Beach City Public Schools:* The current LEED projects in the district total over 1.5 million SF of LEED building space. In addition, VBCPS currently has 21 Energy Star schools totaling 2.3 million SF of building space.



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- **Policy Maker(s)** – *Henry A. J. Ramos and U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan*: Henry A. J. Ramos is at the forefront of system-wide efforts to integrate environmental sustainability into 112 colleges by introducing policy so that it becomes part of their institutional culture. Under Secretary Duncan’s leadership, the U.S. Department of Education’s Green Ribbon Schools program has united the NGO community around a common effort, impacting millions of students across this country as their schools are working to become healthier, more efficient places to receive a 21<sup>st</sup> century education.
- **Moment for the Movement** – *International Green Schools Movement*: For the first Green Apple Day of Service, 49 countries around the world and on every continent came together to make the green schools movement global.
- **Ambassador** – *Frederick E. Harris, Vice Chancellor of College Finance and Facilities Planning for California Community Colleges*: Harris has led the 72-district community college system toward minimizing its environmental impact by reducing energy use through energy efficiency and energy conservation and adoptions of sustainable practices.
- **Business Innovation** – *Interface*: Interface’s “Learning from Nature” brochure was created to share information about biomimicry from a perspective that not only impacts the construction or renovation of education buildings, but influences learning strategies from within the classroom. The brochure was distributed via mail to over 100K decision makers and influencers across North America throughout the K-12 and Higher Ed environments.
- **Community-Based Event** – *Public Purpose Fair, Westminster Schools (Atlanta, Ga.)*: The Public Purpose Fair held in March 2012 was a campus-wide event of service projects and assemblies focused on how Westminster’s community can, and does, strive to make a better world through courses, programs and co-curricular experiences.
- **Collaboration** – *Connecticut Green Leaf Schools Program*: The Connecticut Green LEAF Schools Program encourages K-12 schools to create and improve their environmental and sustainability education, enhance the health and wellness of students and staff, and reduce the environmental impact of their buildings.

As the Best of Green Schools 2012 list demonstrates, there are many benefits to healthier, safer and more efficient schools. On average, green schools use 33 percent less energy and 32 percent less water than conventionally designed schools, significantly reducing utility costs. Green schools can save approximately \$100,000 on operating costs annually – enough to hire two new teachers, buy 5,000 textbooks or purchase 200 new computers.

Please visit [centerforgreenschools.org/bestof2012](http://centerforgreenschools.org/bestof2012) for more information on each of this year’s recipients.

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### **About U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)**

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is committed to a prosperous and sustainable future through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings. USGBC works toward its mission of market transformation through its LEED green building certification program, robust educational offerings, a nationwide network of chapters and affiliates, the annual Greenbuild International Conference & Expo and advocacy in support of public policy that encourages and enables



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green buildings and communities. For more information, visit [usgbc.org](https://usgbc.org) and follow us on Twitter @USGBC, and Facebook at [facebook.com/USGBC](https://facebook.com/USGBC).

### **About the Center for Green Schools at USGBC**

The Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council is making sure every student has the opportunity to attend a green school within this generation. From kindergarten to college and beyond, the Center works directly with staff, teachers, facility, students, ambassadors, elected officials and communities to drive the transformation of all schools into sustainable places to live and learn, work and play. For more information, visit [centerforgreenschools.org](https://centerforgreenschools.org), follow us on Twitter at [@mygreenschools](https://twitter.com/mygreenschools), and like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/centerforgreenschools](https://facebook.com/centerforgreenschools).