



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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LEED® for Schools

What is a green school?

A green school is a building or facility that creates a healthy environment that is conducive to learning. Green schools use less energy and water, fewer resources, and are healthier and safer places for students and teachers while also decreasing operating costs through reduced utility bills.

What is the impact schools have on our community and on the environment?

20 percent of America goes to school every day – that's 55 million students and more than 5 million faculty and staff. Millions of these students and teachers attend schools that are considered substandard or dangerous to occupant health.

What is LEED for Schools?

LEED for Schools is a national, voluntary green building certification program that promotes the design and construction of green schools and provides immediate and measurable results. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), LEED for Schools is the recognized certification program that green schools across the country are using to build schools that are healthy, comfortable, cost-effective and good for the environment. LEED certification provides third party verification to parents, teachers, school boards and the community as a whole that a school building is certified green and is operating exactly the way it was intended to.

- How was the LEED for Schools program developed?
 - The LEED program is developed through consensus-based balloting processes and revised and vetted by USGBC membership.
 - LEED for Schools is supported by USGBC's National Green Schools Campaign and dedicated Green School Advocacy Committees in more than 70 USGBC chapters nationwide.

- Who should use LEED for Schools?
 - USGBC's vision is that every child will attend a green school within a generation. All K-12 schools can use the LEED for Schools program. There are LEED school projects underway in 49 states and the District of Columbia. There are LEED certified schools in a variety of shapes and sizes – rural, urban, suburban, public, private, charter. More than 30% of all LEED certified schools are Title 1 schools.
 - LEED for Schools primarily references national standards; however, local codes can be substituted if they are at equally or more stringent than the referenced standards.
 - LEED for Schools enables schools and districts to set benchmarks and goals specific to a school's unique needs.
 - The LEED Rating System is flexible, not a 'one-sized fits all' approach
 - LEED for Schools has 9 prerequisites and beyond that project teams can choose which credits to pursue based on their environmental and performance goals as long as they meet the minimum threshold for certification
 - There are four different thresholds for LEED certification to recognize varying levels of achievement: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

LEED for Homes
Frequently Asked Questions

- How much does it cost to LEED certify a school?
 - The average cost to register and certify a K-12 school is \$5,500 – less than .001% of a typical school construction budget.
 - According to the Kats study, *Greening America's Schools: Costs and Benefits*, the average cost premium for a green school is less than 2% (for LEED schools 1.52%, for CHPS schools 1.76%).
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- How long does the LEED for Schools certification process take?
 - LEED certification tracks the design and construction timeline of a project. Project teams can submit for certification at or near occupancy of the facility.
- What are the benefits of LEED, particularly for schools?
 - LEED certification is a demonstration that a building project meets a nationally recognized program for sustainability, energy efficiency and quality.
 - LEED certification is a third-party validation of a building's performance. This third party verification is a requirement for all LEED projects to receive certification, to ensure that all projects are built as designed, and operate as intended.
 - **Students** – By addressing issues critical to student health, such as indoor air quality, daylighting, and thermal comfort, LEED for Schools contributes to the improved health of students. A Carnegie-Mellon study found that improved indoor air quality results in a 13.5 – 87% reduction in symptoms like asthma attacks, cold, and flu.
 - **Teachers and Staff** – Green schools report decreased absenteeism and improved teacher and staff retention.
 - **Parents** – LEED is like a “nutrition label” for green, high performing schools. Parents can feel confident that their children are spending their days in schools that are healthy, safe and optimized for learning.
 - **School Decision Makers and Taxpayers** – Third party verification ensures that schools are operating at their highest level of performance, saving energy and water, and reducing operational budgets.
 - **School administrators** – Make cost-effective decisions for your school that benefit students, teachers, the community, and the environment. A school's commitment to LEED signifies that it is a part of a community that makes environmental responsibility a priority.