

THE FUTURE OF GREEN SCHOOLS

SCHOOL FACILITATORS,
TEACHERS AND
ARCHITECTS WORK
TOGETHER TO
PRODUCE
HIGH PERFORMANCE
CLASSROOMS

Robert Kobet, SES Speaker



It's always interesting to ponder the future. It's a past time for some and a vocation for others depending on the subject matter and our reasons for wondering what the future may hold. In some matters, it may be inconsequential. Not so with the future of our schools. The good news is most indicators suggest the future of high performance green schools is very bright.

For the purposes of this article a high performance green school:

- is an energy, material and resource efficient facility.
- is optimized for the health and productivity of the students, staff and visitors.
- recognizes the connections between the site and facility, the community and the curriculum.
- features an integrated curriculum that uses the community, site and facility to enrich the educational delivery process.

If architecture is one of the clearest manifestations of our culture, I believe it is safe to say that there are few building types more important in our society than schools. Many of us have a deep emotional connection with our educational experience and an inherent sense few things are more important to our children's future than a good education. As Chair of the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Schools committee, I have seen first hand the passion and commitment of countless professionals and volunteers dedicated to green schools for all children within a generation. The same holds for everyone involved with the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) and the ever-growing number of organizations and programs focused on growing the high performance green school movement. Embodied in this movement are the basic ingredients for a bright future—very high energy and steadily growing momentum based on the realization that high performance schools are good for our children, our economy and our country.

At a macro level, we need to appreciate the high performance green school

(HPGS) movement is global. Several international conferences have been held or are being planned that feature or have tracks dedicated to HPGS. Conferences programs are becoming more comprehensive and robust as the importance of the community/facility/curriculum connections are realized. New excitement is being generated by the realization that we are educating the children of the Shift Age who respond enthusiastically to the use of social networking technologies to expand their horizons. A simple extension of this reality is being used in HPGS to link student peers around the world. Thus, the potential for this generation of students to drive the green school movement in the future is very real.

Teachers around the world are using everything from community gardens in urban redevelopment projects to newly-installed photovoltaic arrays to meet course requirements while improving student performance, test scores and attendance.

In the U.S., the HPGS movement is gaining traction and expanding in logical and predictable ways that bode well for the future. The Green Schools Caucus founded in March 2007 by Reps. Darlene Hooley (D-Ore.), Michael McCaul (R-Texas) and Jim Matheson (D-Utah), aims to raise awareness amongst fellow lawmakers about how sustainably designed schools could help lower building energy and maintenance costs and bolster student learning and health. It is one of the largest bipartisan groups in the House of Representatives. The Green School Caucus is supported by the U.S. Green Building Council and the Green Building Certification Institute.

These organizations jointly administer LEED for Schools, a building rating system used to design and construct HPGS. LEED for Existing Schools, currently under development, will serve as another market transformation tool as it assists stakeholders in improving the operation and maintenance of existing school buildings. This will be a

major influence in the future of HPGS. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) forecasts new enrollment records are expected every year through 2017, the last year for which NCES projections have been developed. Depending on how one categorizes existing facilities the NCES states that there are over 180,000 existing K12 schools. The future of HPGS will be determined in large measure by how we apply our resources to rejuvenating our existing schools. The benefits are no less real than those associated with new construction.

Most of all I believe the future of high performance green schools rests with how we use our schools to enrich the educational delivery process. We spend over 80 percent of our time

inside buildings. Yet, there is little K-12 curriculum that educates our students on the impact of the built environment on our physical, mental and emotional well being, let alone the world around us. A school cannot declare itself a high performance school unless it includes an integrated curriculum that celebrates the connections between the community, site and facility and what our children are being taught; the curriculum as we know it in a non traditional way. This message has become so pervasive that the green integrated curriculum segment of the HPGS movement has taken on a life of its own. Teachers around the world are using everything from community gardens in urban redevelopment projects to newly-installed photovoltaic arrays in horizontally integrated, collaborative approaches to meeting course requirements while improving student performance, test scores and attendance. HPGS are being used to enrich the educational

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Networking And Special Events

Networking Reception

5–6:30 pm, Thursday, November 19

Meet and greet your customers, colleagues, and suppliers before dinner, at this reception open to all School Equipment Show attendees and exhibitors.

Networking Breakfast

A complimentary continental breakfast will be available for all School Equipment Show attendees Wednesday–Friday. Come early to network with your peers and start your day off right!

Manufacturer/Distributor Sales Meetings

Distributors can save time and money by attending multiple sales meetings held by suppliers throughout the School Equipment Show. Meetings are held both on the show floor before exhibit hours and in private meeting rooms, allowing distributors to find out the latest sales information from the vendors they represent.

Special New Show Feature – Phoenix School Tour

12:15 pm, Friday, November 20

On the last day of the School Equipment Show attendees can take part in an architect-guided tour of The Bio Science High School, just blocks from the convention center. This state-of-the-art science-based classroom and lab focused school was designed with the future of science and technology in mind, providing a flexible lab model that can morph with upcoming technology and various teaching strategies—preparing students for mentor-and internships with the surrounding community. The tour—taking place Friday, November 20 at 1 pm—is free to registered attendees of the School Equipment Show, but pre-registration is required.

Societal norms have and will continue to change. Our knowledge base is exploding. Technology is invading every part of our lives. How will this affect teaching and learning? How can we apply what we have learned about learning styles, the physiology and social requirements of learning, advances in technology and new teaching strategies and use that knowledge to anticipate what is next? How can we provide the flexibility in facilities to support these recent and impending changes?

10:30 am–11:45 am

If We Know So Much, Why Are We Still In the Box? (Part 2)

Paul Winslow, Orcutt|Winslow

Best Practices in School Purchasing

Moderators: **Jim Brady**, AIA, REFP, America's School House Council and **Lauren Volk**, LEED AP, Wyoming School Facility Commission

In the session we will tap the expertise of a number of state facilities department directors as well as facilities directors from large school districts across the U.S. to learn more about their similarities, differences and expectations; their guidelines, policies, and purchasing practices; and what is considered best practice in their state.

Trends in Education and Design

Deb Moore, School Planning and Management

In the last five years over \$100 billion worth of K-12 construction projects were completed. With growing enrollments, advances in technology, changes in teaching and learning styles, and our response to student needs and parent expectations—the end to this era is nowhere in sight. In this session we will look at the facts and figures about school construction, innovative projects and emerging trends, and the societal and educational forces driving new school design.

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delivery process not in ways that are additive but instead more relevant, interesting and enjoyable than rote teaching practices. Shift age children are interested in and very capable of blending social technologies with relevant lessons they can understand and relate to. They will either lead or be left behind as the world shifts with them.

It has been said that public education is the genius of our democracy. If our democracy is to endure I would add that high performance green schools are the Bill of Rights. Thomas Jefferson said that if the cause is just revolution can be a good thing. The high performance green school movement needs to be a revolution that guarantees a just, prosperous and happy future for our children. We need to prepare them for the hard work ahead of being responsible citizens in a world that will no doubt include a vast array of new technologies but will be hard pressed to provide greater access to dwindling natural resources.

In his book, *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran reminds us that our children are not our own but belong to the future. They are like arrows in our quiver and our responsibility is to launch them into that future. What better bow to use than a high performance green school?

Robert J. Kobet, AIA, is president of Sustainaissance International—a multi-disciplined architectural consulting firm specializing in sustainable design and development, high performance LEED Certified buildings and environmental education. He will be presenting "Green/High Performance Schools," Wednesday, November 18, 9-10:15 am, during the School Equipment Show in Phoenix.

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