



Greening the School Environment Inside & Out

Students learn better in green schools. Test scores go up while absenteeism among students, teachers and administrators goes down. Add cost savings to the benefit of doing less harm to the natural environment, and ecologically friendly schools are the ultimate greening success. This is the message that the Alliance for Leadership and Interconnection (ALLY) embodies.

Bringing together individuals, organizations, civic leaders and businesses to work in collaboration to design green, sustainable school environments is not a dream, it's happening right now. Through the cultivation of ecological stewardship and awareness of the relationships among human, built and natural environments, we helped Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) to become the greenest school district in Ohio.

ALLY led introductions to community partners with shared missions to provide critical momentum for CPS going green. Ultimately, this saved CPS significant time and effort.

Robert L. Knight, Sustainable Design Coordinator
Cincinnati Public Schools (2007-2009)

It's Good to Be Green

Leading the nation in the number of registered green schools with the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), Ohio has more registered schools than the next five states combined. Green building is more than a fad: the Ohio Schools Facilities Commission created a policy similar to the one ALLY helped draft for CPS that mandates all new school construction and significant renovations must meet USGBC Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

ALLY, in partnership with the Green and Healthy Schools Network, started or has led a host of greening activities.

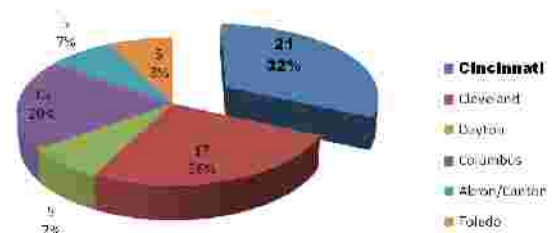
- % Urban Timber Recycling : Partnering with Cincinnati Parks and Hamilton County Environmental Services Solid Waste Division to harvest local timber and manufacture it locally into hardwood furniture for the schools, CPS was able to purchase these essentials at the same cost as furniture they would have imported. This program won an \$80,000 grant from Ohio Department of Natural Resources for the purpose of expansion.
- % Storm Water Management: CPS received over \$1 million in grants from the Hamilton County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) to study best management practices, including green roofs, porous concrete, rain gardens and bioswales (see page 2).
- % Green Education Resources: Cincinnati Public Television Learning Services Department, CET Connect, is working with ALLY and various partners to develop an on-line repository of educational resources supporting environmental education.
- % Indoor Air Quality: CPS Environmental Safety and Health Coordinator, Cincinnati Health Department Medical Director for School & Adolescent Health, Director of Growing Well Cincinnati, and representatives from Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, GBBN Architects and ALLY are working to optimize the indoor air quality in all CPS buildings (see page 2).

There are 956 registered green schools in the country; Ohio has 254 (over 25%)

OH – 255
TX – 59
PA – 55
CA – 48
VA – 43
IL – 41
MD – 40
NM – 38
FL – 38
NY – 20
CO – 15
OR – 13
WA – 5

USGBC data 7/19/10

LEED Certified Projects
by city limits 7/19/10



USGBC data 7/19/10, graphics by emersion DESIGN



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Cincinnati is the model for our National Green Schools Campaign.

Kathleen Rogers, Executive Director
Earth Day Network
Washington, D.C.



Students as Teachers

ALLY seeks to work directly with the people affected by the environments in question, as well as with the people working with them to manage those environments in healthy and sustainable ways. Eco-mentoring is one way CPS students are mentoring up – teaching adults about the sustainable features in their schools.

Developing classroom materials, lesson plans and other resources for teachers to incorporate the innovative aspects of the school building into science, math and other subjects is yet another way students are influencing teaching, with the help of ALLY.

Solar panels, rain gardens, bicycle racks and other outdoor elements of school design extend the classroom into the natural world, making environmentalism essential to learning.

The Air We Breathe

The health of an indoor environment is only as good as that of the outdoor environment surrounding it. This is why ALLY has made Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) a top priority. In addition to assisting with the development and implementation of the Anti-Idling protocol for parking lots and other areas around CPS facilities, ALLY has also played a key role in assisting the University of Cincinnati to secure a \$225,000 grant to monitor vehicle exhaust surrounding schools. This grant also supported the implementation of the anti-idling campaign in collaboration with community partners, including the Cincinnati Health Department.



If you would like to understand more about the intimate relationship between the human condition and the health of all living systems, please contact ALLY's Executive Director, Ms. Ginny Frazier (nsgreenschool@yahoo.com) and visit www.allyohio.org

Please specify if you would like to discuss an article for your publication, participating in a workshop or if you have another project in mind.

Thank you for your interest!