



# Issue Brief

The American Institute of Architects • Government Advocacy • Federal Issue Position and Analysis

## Key Points

- *America's schools are in desperate need of repair. A December 2008 study by the American Federation of Teachers estimates school-infrastructure need at more than \$254 billion nationally.*
- *Numerous studies have shown that green, high performing schools improve the learning environment for students, promote healthier students and teachers, and cost less to operate through reduced energy consumption.*
- *The recession has forced many states and local school districts to put a hold on school modernization projects. A federal commitment to 21<sup>st</sup> Century school renovation will get stalled projects moving, creating jobs in all 50 states.*

## DESIGNING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

# A Federal Commitment to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools

### AIA Position

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) strongly supports government policies and programs that will spur the creation of high-performing, 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools. Twenty-first century schools improve health and educational achievement, promote energy savings, and effect positive environmental change. A federal commitment to modernizing our nation's schools will also create jobs for the design and construction industry in all 50 states.

### Action Sought

The AIA urges Congress to pass legislation that would provide funding to state and local school districts for the modernization and renovation of K-12 public schools. Specifically, the AIA calls on Congress to pass *The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act of 2009 (HR 2187)*.

### Explanation and Justification

The demands of today's educational programs and services are overwhelming the structural capacity of America's schools, which were built on average almost 50 years ago. Too many of America's children go to school in overcrowded buildings with leaky roofs, faulty electrical systems, and outdated technology; all of which compromises their ability to achieve, succeed and build the educational foundations necessary for the workforce of the 21st century.

*The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act* will assist states and local communities in meeting these staggering needs through federal grants to local school districts for energy efficient school modernization projects. This legislation would provide \$6.4 billion in grants to states and local school districts at a time when significant fiscal relief for local school districts is needed. The federal grants will help states and communities stretch their limited resources to pay for additional school facility projects and essential education programs, while leaving decision making about the schools at the local level.

H.R. 2187 will assist states in meeting the school facility needs of local communities by providing resources to repair, renovate and modernize America's schools. It will stimulate the creation of more than 100,000 new jobs. These jobs will be generated in the construction industry among suppliers, ranging from architects and engineers to roofing contractors and other construction workers who modernize, renovate and repair schools.

Modern, more energy efficient, green and better schools will improve the learning environment for students, enhance the workplace for teachers and school administrators and most importantly 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools will advance student achievement in urban, rural and suburban communities in every state.