



For immediate release  
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## **Green Schools Coalition of Westchester to Hold First Membership Conference on November 14<sup>th</sup>**

White Plains, NY - November 1, 2009: The Green Schools Coalition of Westchester (GSCW) will hold its first membership conference on Saturday, November 14, 2009 from 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., at 360 Hamilton Avenue in White Plains.

The Green Schools Coalition of Westchester (GSCW) is a coalition of public and independent schools that seeks to advance education and best practices for sustainability in the schools and communities across Westchester County. The organization's Founding Committee includes Steven Frantz, Director; Robert Funicello, Director of Environmental Projects for Westchester County; Katie Ginsberg, Executive Director, CELF, Fred Koontz, Executive Director, Teatown Lake Reservation; and Dennis Power, Westchester Department of Environmental Facilities. They attribute the genesis of GSCW to the vision and efforts of four groups:

- The GSWC founders and sponsors: [Teatown Lake Reservation](#), [CEL F \(Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation\)](#) & Westchester County
- Members of the Education Sector of the Westchester County Global Warming Task Force
- School district teams of students, teachers, administrators and parents who attended the Saturday, March 28, 2009 meeting at Teatown Lake Reservation
- The 60 plus public schools/districts and independent schools who responded to our recent questionnaire regarding school sustainability issues ([details on the results](#))

The GSCW's mission is to help schools and districts support each other in implementing the [Westchester County Climate Change Task Force Action Plans for K-12 Schools & Higher Education](#).

### **GSCW Membership Conference: Saturday, November 14th**

This important and *highly participatory* conference will take place from 8:30 am – 1:00 pm. The agenda includes: a) Keynote Speaker-David Hursh, Associate Professor of Education, Warner School of Education-University of Rochester; b) General Session; c) Stakeholder Groups - students, parents, teachers, administrators, and facilities managers; d) Tiered Discussions designed to respond to needs of schools/districts at beginning stages of going "green" and those who are dealing with more advanced sustainability issues; e) Team meetings; and much more. Networking with colleagues and learning about "green shortcuts" are just two of the many extra benefits to be derived from this 5-hour conference.

The GSCW realizes that some schools and districts have advanced efforts underway in both curriculum and carbon reduction programs and some districts are just beginning to explore what

they can do and where they should begin. The organization plans to support each and every K-12 member school or district, public or private. Director Steven Frantz cites, "Our ultimate success, a healthy, sustainable planet for all, depends on our collective and collaborative efforts. Together we can make a difference."

### **Green Schools Coalition Survey Results**

A sustainability snapshot of Westchester schools was taken over the spring and summer of 2009 via an on-line Green Schools Coalition Survey. Sixty three (63) public schools districts/schools and independent schools responded and proved that a level of seriousness about sustainability already exists and at varying levels of development. [The Survey Results](#) provide insights into how schools are tackling climate change issues from a facility, budgetary, policy, curriculum and community-wide approach and demonstrate why so many administrators, teachers, parents and students are interested in sharing resources and partnering together.

### **Leadership Briefing for Superintendents and Headmasters was held on October 1st**

GSCW's first meeting was considered a tremendous success. More than fifty Westchester school leaders, including four high school students, attended the October 1st two-hour briefing at the New York Power Authority building in White Plains. Highlights of the meeting included inspirational presentations by Dr. McGill, Scarsdale Superintendent; Dr. Frances Wills, Briarcliff Superintendent; Dr. Karen Benedict, Katonah Lewisboro Deputy Superintendent; and Mr. Peter McAndrew, Hackley School Finance Director.

Members of the GSCW Founding Committee discussed the formation of the Coalition, its mission and goals, survey results, and how the GSCW will support individual schools and districts.

### **How to Join GSCW**

Superintendents and headmasters may [register "teams" to be members of the Coalition](#). Each five-member team will include a student, teacher, parent, curriculum/instruction leader, and a facilities administrator. In order to join, schools must pledge support for the ideals of sustainability education and recognition of its importance (see [Westchester Global Warming Task Force Education Vision Statement](#)). Members are expected to attend appropriate GSCW conferences and meetings and agree to collaborate with other Westchester school teams to support a shared vision.

[GSCW Membership Form](#)