

## **GREEN SCHOOLS RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, public education institutions are experiencing a historic decline in the condition of buildings, structures and equipment with significant health and safety implications for faculty, staff and students; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO) reports that K-12 schools need at a minimum \$112 billion to bring existing buildings to meet minimum building standards. This estimate does not cover the cost of new construction needed to accommodate a growing student population, which was expected to plateau in 2009. The GAO has established that 25,000 schools nationally are in need of extensive repair or replacement and also reports that 67 percent of central city schools report at least one building feature in need of repair or replacement; and

WHEREAS, asthma prevalence is high among both students and staff. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has established that education employees in K-12 schools have higher rates of asthma compared to the general working population. The prevalence of asthma among children in urban areas is at an all-time high. Nearly one in 13 school-age children has asthma; and

WHEREAS, correlation studies show a strong positive relationship between overall building conditions and student achievement. Researchers have repeatedly found a difference of 5-17 percentile points between achievement of students in poor buildings and those in environmentally adequate buildings, when the socioeconomic status of students is controlled; and

WHEREAS, schools and colleges currently spend more money every year on energy and utility costs exceeding the combined cost of supplies and books; and

WHEREAS, building construction and operation is responsible for 48 percent of the energy used in the United States; and

WHEREAS, green and sustainable schools are new or renovated schools that create a healthy environment that is conducive to learning while saving energy resources and money. Green schools focus on improvements in site selection, daylighting, indoor air quality, thermal comfort, acoustics and classroom design – all of which have an important impact on a child's ability to learn and a teacher's ability to teach; and

WHEREAS, the benefits of superior indoor air quality – a key principle of green school design—have been linked to lower asthma exacerbations, increased teacher and staff retention and reduced absenteeism. Seventeen studies have reported significant improvement in occupant health when ventilation increased; and

WHEREAS, green schools use an average of 30 percent to 50 percent less energy compared to conventional schools; the average green school saves \$100,000 a year in energy costs—enough to hire two new teachers or staff, or buy 5,000 textbooks; and

WHEREAS, a green school building itself becomes an interactive teaching tool. Green schools create opportunities for curriculum innovation and hands-on, project-based learning; and

WHEREAS, the education sector should lead the nation in assuring a quality learning environment suitable for training future climate leaders, engineers, scientists and business people who will help society overcome the challenges before us:

**RESOLVED, that the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) urge state labor bodies to advocate for their legislatures to adopt green school legislation that will appropriate the 1 percent to 2 percent premium to school districts when they design, build, renovate and operate schools that meet the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) for Schools certification, or criteria comparable to the Collaborative for High-Performing Schools (CHPS) standards; and**

**RESOLVED, that the Coalition of Labor Union Women advocate for federal legislation and regulation, like the 21<sup>st</sup> Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act of 2006, that will accelerate the building and renovation of schools to meet LEED or CHPS standards; and**

**RESOLVED, that the Coalition of Labor Union Women work with local union and central labor bodies to create local sustainability programs and help them to be actively involved in the building design/maintenance process on their school campuses and in their school districts; and**

**RESOLVED, that the Coalition of Labor Union Women work with its local chapters and environmental advocacy organizations to advocate for the creation of curriculum for environmental education at all levels and the creation of demonstration projects at schools and colleges for teaching and researching environmental sustainability; and**

**RESOLVED, that the Coalition of Labor Union Women work with labor unions to advocate for unionized trades to build green; and**

**RESOLVED, that the Coalition of Labor Union Women advocate for LEED certification for new building construction as a means of achieving green and sustainable schools.**