There are over approximately 100,000 public K-12 school facilities serving our nation’s teachers and children across the country. PTA believes that every student—regardless of their family’s income—must have access to a safe, welcoming and high-quality public school. The average school building is over 44 years old. Our nation’s public schools are the second largest national infrastructure sector for capital investment. Yet, historically, unlike roads and bridges, school facilities have received virtually no federal investment. Given state budget shortfalls and the need for economic recovery, now is the time for the federal government to invest in school infrastructure.

**WE ADVOCATE TO**

Address health hazards including poor air quality, substandard heating and cooling equipment, unsafe drinking water supply and lead contamination.

Enhance digital infrastructure to ensure equity.

Redesign schools to meet community needs such as school-based health clinics, after school and summer learning opportunities, and career technical education facilities for children and adults.

Modernize schools, including making them green, so their energy consumption and carbon footprints are reduced.

**THE DATA**

There are approximately *100,000* public K-12 schools in the U.S. ¹

Every school day, nearly *50 million* K-12 students and six million adults occupy close to 100,000 public-school buildings on an estimated two million acres of land. ²

In more than *30%* of public-school facilities, windows, plumbing and HVAC systems are considered in “fair” or “poor” condition. ³

A 2016 report on the condition of school facilities that are funded and operated by the federal Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) shows that five of the *13* schools visited for the report are in condemned buildings, meaning that the extent of their disrepair is so great that they cannot be occupied. ⁴
VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Two school districts in Washington state—Lake Washington School District (LWSD) and Mercer Island School District—and their corresponding PTSA councils have sustainability programs. Both PTSAs and districts have leveraged the King County Green Schools Program to achieve green building success. The goal of both PTSA councils was to build trust with the district and school personnel over time. District leaders meet with PTA sustainability leaders to discuss projects and progress on a regular basis. They found their best successes at working with food, custodial, building and operational staff to implement changes over time.

They started with easy-to-implement projects at schools, achieved positive results and then tackled larger projects and set district-wide goals. Cost-saving measures were of key interest to school districts. Active involvement from school-level and district-level personnel was critical to setting a long-term vision and accomplishing goals. Two goals both PTSAs had in common with their districts were installing LED bulbs and low-flow water faucets. This sharing of ideas and respect over time led to increased trust in PTA and incorporation of PTA sustainability leaders as trusted advisors in district-wide projects. Because of persistent and respectful advocacy on the part of PTA advocacy leaders, LWSD is considering installing water bottle filling stations in all schools. This would enable students to bring their own bottles and reduce single-use plastic bottles—a tangible, positive way to reduce the use of fossil fuels and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change.

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