In late October, the state K-12 school facility officials from public agencies from 9 states will meet to review and approve the first strategic plan and organizational structure for a national association of state agencies and officials responsible for K-12 public-school facilities. The states to send representatives to Washington, D.C. to advance this work are California, Maryland, Rhode Island, New Mexico, Ohio, Washington State, New Jersey, Iowa, and New York. In addition to officials from these states, the nascent group has benefited from input from officials from Georgia, Alaska, Utah, Maine, Vermont, and South Carolina. The founding board will be working on strategic planning and organizational development with the help of the 21st Century School Fund.

States, on average, over the 2005-2008 time period provided nearly one third of all funding for school construction. The roles and responsibilities vary from state to state, but among the varied state responsibilities are funding, facility standards, technical assistance, project management, financing, planning and oversight. The challenges and opportunities of this work at the state level lead a group of state facility leaders to begin to share information about state-level K-12 facility work. This association will help school-facilities officials identify and share best practices and research mission-critical issues such as metrics for facility quality, information-management technologies and accountability. Through state-level policy, standards, guidelines, technical assistance and funding of K-12 buildings and grounds, state agencies can assist local districts to improve the quality of education in our schools as well as the quality of life in our communities.

Re-envisioning California's Role in K-12 Infrastructure

"California's K-12 Educational Infrastructure Investments: Leveraging the State's Role for Quality School Facilities in Sustainable Communities" takes a comprehensive look at the state of K-12 school facilities in California, focusing on state-level policies and funding patterns. The recommendations lay out a detailed framework that re-visions the state's role to appropriately support educational quality and contribute to healthy and sustainable communities. Released by the Center for Cities and Schools at the University of California, Berkeley, the report is intended to help guide state leaders in aligning infrastructure investments for efficiencies that offer multiple benefits for Californians. The report also includes a message of support for implementation from California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. The key recommendations of the report include:

1) Develop a state K-12 infrastructure vision and master plan
2) Provide state support for local educational-facility planning
3) Establish and sustain a state information system on public-school facilities
4) Revise state standards for public school facilities - revision of California Code of Regulations, Title 5
5) Reform the state's policies and procedures for setting state K-12 capital-funding project priorities
6) Revise policies and procedures for setting state K-12 district allocation systems and priorities
Remembering Chicago Public Schools Advocate Donald Moore by Jackie Leavy, Chicago Public Schools Advocate Leader

Dear Supporters of Great Public Schools for All Students:

It is with great sadness that I'm writing, to help inform parents, educators, and all of you advocates for our public school students, that Don Moore died on Aug. 31st. Based on initial information shared by his colleagues, Don died of a heart attack. Don was the founder and Executive Director of DESIGNS FOR CHANGE (DFC). He led DFC since its founding in Chicago in 1977 and had over 30 years of experience studying urban school reform and directing urban education reform advocacy and school-assistance efforts.

He was an early champion of the notion that parent and community empowerment at the local-school level was-and IS-vital to true education reform. He was deeply involved in the advocacy to enact the 1988 Illinois State reform legislation that created elected Local School Councils in all Chicago Public Schools. And, ever since, DFC has supported Local School Councils (LSC) across the city, providing training and helping LSCs to continue improving educational quality and student achievement; while providing independent research and analysis and advocacy “to ensure that reform initiatives translate into improved student achievement.” And so much more . . .

If you don't know the history of the campaign for LSCs, now would be a fitting time to learn more, or re-acquaint yourselves with that history. Read "School Reform, Chicago Style - How Citizens Organized to Change Public Policy" from DFC's website - which chronicles that history and struggle, in which Don was such a passionate and determined leader.

Remember him...

D.C. Growing Healthy Schools Week, October 15-20th

Organizers of the District's 6th annual school-garden celebration are inviting participation in this year's event from October 15-20th.

The kick-off is a cooking demonstration on Monday using produce from the garden shared by Savoy Elementary and Thurgood Marshall Academy High School and the finale is a Saturday tour of school gardens throughout the city. See the event's new website for details, including a photo contest and an award for best school garden.

D.C. schools came early to the national surge of interest in school gardens, with more than 88 gardens now in schools all over the city. Schools have relied on a wealth of local knowledge such as outreach from and expertise within the Watershed Protection Division of the D.C. Dept. of the Environment and the long-standing example of the Washington Youth Garden at the National Arboretum. Since 2010, when the Healthy Schools Act established a securely funded School Garden Specialist within the Dept. of Wellness and Nutrition Services at the State Superintendent's Office, the city has been on its way to being a real leader in school gardening, improved childhood nutrition, outdoor education, and environmental literacy.

The D.C. Farm-to-School Network, the D.C. Schoolyard Greening Committee and the Wellness and Nutrition Services division of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education are the chief organizers this year of D.C.'s Growing Healthy Schools Week - working with a host of volunteers. Check it out!

For Generations To Come - A Leadership Guide to Renewing Public School Buildings

There are many reasons to work to improve the school buildings in your community. Perhaps the school building is unsafe or too large, the classrooms are crowded and the enrollment is growing, or art is taught from a cart and the wiring cannot support enough computers. Or there may be facilities problems at the district level, with some schools overcrowded while others have empty classrooms, or the district may be considering a change from neighborhood to magnet schools. For Generations to Come, a readable, 60 page guide written by the 21st Century
School Fund, provides a clear framework for community involvement in the complex process of modernizing or building new public-school buildings.

**Join the Through-Your-Lens Campaign**

Students, teachers, parents, and school board members: join a campaign to create a gallery of photos and stories about our nation's public-school buildings and grounds. Take a photo of your school's conditions, post it on your Facebook page, and then tag it to the Through-Your-Lens Facebook page. We will use your submitted photos and stories for advocating for high-quality school facilities for ALL children.

**Green Apple Day of Service**

On Sept. 29, 2012, the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council will host the first ever Green Apple Day of Service. For one day, advocates from across the country and around the world will come together in support of healthy and sustainable schools by taking real action in their communities. Find or create an event in your community!