

RESOLUTION #6

**AFT MICHIGAN
70TH CONVENTION
MAY 2-3, 2008**

MICHIGAN GREEN SCHOOLS

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 US General Accounting Office (GAO) reports that K-12 schools need at a minimum 112 billion dollars 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 is not expected to plateau until 2009. The GAO has established that 25,000 schools nationally are in need of extensive repair or replacement and also reports that 67% 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 thirteen 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 currently spend more money every year on energy and utility costs exceeding the combined cost of supplies and books; 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

<over>

Whereas, Green schools use an average of 30-50% less energy compared to conventional schools; the average green school saves \$100,000 dollars 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. NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will urge the state of Michigan to adopt green school legislation that will appropriate the 1-2% premium to school districts when they design, build, renovate and operate schools that meet the US 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 AFT Michigan advocate for federal legislation and regulation that will accelerate the building and renovation of schools to meet LEED or CHPS standards; and BE IT FINALLY

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan submit this resolution for consideration by the July 2008 AFT Convention.

Submitted by:
Legislation Committee