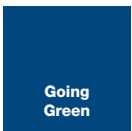




Charles Lockwood is an environmental and real-estate consultant who is often quoted as an authority on **green architecture**. A longtime HEMISPHERES contributor, he is based in Southern California and New York City. His articles and research have appeared in the *Harvard Business Review*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.



Charles Lockwood



Growing Green Schools

Education is a natural in the fertile ground of sustainable schools.

WHAT PARENT WOULDN'T WANT TO IMPROVE THEIR child's school test scores and reduce the number of sick days? Turns out, enrolling your child in a green school is a great way to do that. Studies by the Hescong Mahone Group found that students who had classrooms with natural light, superior indoor air quality, and outdoor views had **10 percent to 21 percent higher learning rates and test scores**, compared with students in classrooms with minimal natural daylight and outdoor views. Traditional building materials can release gasses linked to headaches, colds, asthma, and weakened immune systems.

Green, sustainable schools—and there are a growing number of them—are constructed with **“alternative” materials**, such as low- and zero-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints, strawboard panels, cabinetry

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made from wheat (rather than formaldehyde-laced particle board), and natural linoleum flooring made from jute and linseed oil (rather than dioxin-packed vinyl). **Absenteeism dropped 15 percent** when students moved into the green Ash Creek Intermediate School in Oregon. “A green school is also a ‘living laboratory’ that educates children, their parents, and the community about the environment,” says architect Wendy Rogers of LPA Architects in Irvine, California. Children experience the natural environment on a daily, practical basis by studying in natural light rather than under artificial lighting and **breathing fresh air rather than recycled air**. Better yet, green schools have lower overhead costs. A 2006 study by Capital E found that, on average, green schools use 33 percent less energy and 32 percent less water than standard schools. Best of all, green doesn't require a huge initial investment; sustainable schools have been built on standard school budgets. ■—Charles Lockwood

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