



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Education, Business and Environmental Leaders Call for Action to Ensure Universal Sustainability Literacy in all U.S. Public Schools by 2040**

*Center for Green Schools at USGBC and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Release  
National Action Plan for Educating for Sustainability*

**Washington, D.C.** — (March 25, 2014) — Today, the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council, together with global education leader Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH), released a *National Action Plan for Educating for Sustainability*, a call for action to ensure that Education for Sustainability (EfS) is accessible to all students across the United States. The plan outlines a robust goal for all 50 states to adopt a comprehensive green schools policy that includes a graduation requirement around sustainability literacy by 2040.

This plan marks the first time in the sustainability education movement that the most notable leaders of education, top U.S. providers of K-12 academic content and practitioners on the ground have come together around EfS themes.

“When the U.S. Department of Education published its Green Ribbon Schools award which called for all K-12 graduates to be environmentally literate, we received that as a directive for the community to band together and figure out how we will ensure that happens,” said Rachel Gutter, director of the Center for Green Schools at USGBC. “This National Action Plan represents the perspectives of the leading minds and the strongest champions of EfS for the first time together with one voice committing to a series of actions that will ensure that every student graduating from a U.S. K-12 school will be environmentally literate by the year 2040.”

The action plan contains 11 sections that examine critical elements involved in ensuring that every student receives sustainability education by 2040. These categories include: collaboration, economic drivers, integrated content and curriculum, leadership, policy, pre-service teacher preparation, professional development, public awareness, research, student assessment and teacher evaluation. Each section is authored by a different expert in the EfS field, with additional content provided by schools and business contributors including leaders from United Technologies Corporation, Office Depot and Rep. John Sarbanes (D-Md.).

“EfS increases student engagement, a catalyst for both academic achievement and drop-out prevention, providing a meaningful context to prepare students for careers and life beyond school,” said David Sobel, senior faculty at Antioch University New England and lead author of the National Action Plan. “EfS allows schools, districts and states to focus simultaneously on preparation for college, career and civic life by providing students opportunities to explore and improve social, economic and environmental conditions at home and abroad. And recent national calls to prioritize STEM education (science, technology, engineering and math) are deeply enriched by the interdisciplinary nature of EfS.”

In June 2013, the Center for Green Schools and HMH brought together stakeholders from academic, corporate and nonprofit sectors to envision a future where our schools support thriving, healthy and regenerative communities. Subject matter experts undertook the task of recommending key actions that, collectively, outline a pathway to achieve the ambitious goal around environmental literacy within this generation. The action plan intends to propel efforts to affect policies and practices through collaboration, alignment and large-scale implementation.

## **U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL**

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“At Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, we believe that all students can and should graduate educated for a sustainable future. As one of the world’s leading K-12 education providers, we have the unique opportunity to directly impact this goal through our content,” said Mary Cullinane, chief content officer and executive vice president, corporate affairs at HMH. “We’re calling on our colleagues within the education sector to read this National Action Plan, consider your role in educating for sustainability and join us to take action to ensure all students graduate empowered and enthusiastic about their future.”

Recently, HMH launched a first-ever campaign that rewards every school or district decision-maker with a donation to the Center for Green Schools at USGBC’s Green Apple initiative when they consider the environment by registering for a virtual sample instead of requesting a physical sample pack from their HMH sales representative.

For more information and to download the *National Action Plan for Educating for Sustainability*, please visit [centerforgreenschools.org/nationalactionplan](http://centerforgreenschools.org/nationalactionplan).

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### **About the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council**

The Center for Green Schools at USGBC is making sure every student has the opportunity to attend a green school within this generation. From kindergarten to college and beyond, the Center works directly with staff, teachers, faculty, students, administrators, elected officials and communities to drive the transformation of all schools into sustainable places to live and learn, work and play. For more information, visit [centerforgreenschools.org](http://centerforgreenschools.org) or find us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

### **About Houghton Mifflin Harcourt**

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (NASDAQ:HMHC) is a global learning company with the mission of changing people’s lives by fostering passionate, curious learners. Among the world’s largest providers of pre-K–12 education solutions and one of its longest-established publishing houses, HMH combines cutting-edge research, editorial excellence and technological innovation to improve teaching and learning environments and solve complex literacy and education challenges. HMH’s interactive, results-driven education solutions are utilized by 50 million students in over 150 countries, and its renowned and awarded novels, non-fiction, children’s books and reference works are enjoyed by readers throughout the world. For more information, visit [www.hmhco.com](http://www.hmhco.com).

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