



Post-Event Report Green Schools Conference

Post-Event Report

Executive Summary

Event Overview

- Event Goals & KPIs
- Attendance and Demographics
- Event Timeline | Achievements v Adjustments

Marketing and Promotion Analysis

Content and Activities Summary

Attendee Survey / Feedback

Key Takeaways + Lessons Learned

Action Items

Appendices and Links





Executive Summary

2025 Green Schools Conference

Event Executive Summary

At **the 2025 Green Schools Conference (GSC)**, we celebrated *the power of storytelling to impact change*. Though the **2025** attendance was the lowest to date with **370 delegates** from **42 states** (a decrease of **15%** from prior year), the GSC was colocated with the ADAPT Southeast Regional Conference, which brought **161** attendees to the conference location, maximizing the organization's investment for the event.

The event achieved **overall sustainable financial health**, managed **expenses** effectively and resulted in a **net positive event at just over 10%** goal while maintaining the desired attendee experience.

With **23 sessions**, **4 workshops** and **3 tours**, this **2-day conference** offered numerous opportunities for attendees to learn from leading innovators, to share best practices and to drive the implementation of global standards.

The **2 plenary sessions** brought together school leaders, students, industry experts, and climate storytellers to share their expertise on advancing green school initiatives. The sessions highlighted the power of personal storytelling in effectively communicating climate journeys and fostering greater engagement in sustainability efforts within schools..

One of this year's **innovations** included targeted opportunities for attendee to attendee engagement. We introduced **Closing Circles** which built on the Opening Circles concept in 2024 and created an opportunity for attendees to share takeaways learned from the conference experience that will further advance their work in their respective schools and districts.

Once again the **2025 GSC** offered unique experiences for attendees, combining plenary sessions with innovative speakers, interactive workshops, tours and endless networking opportunities. We are confident they left with all the tools they need to advance the green schools movement!

PP Cost of Event: \$609

Net Profit Margin: \$12,268

Event Wins & Opportunities

- ✓ Win: Introduced Closing Circles
- ✓ Win: Introduced Students Speak Out For Climate Essay Contest
- ✓ Win: Incorporated New Biophilic Design Elements (Puppy Therapy, Green Rentals)
- ✓ Win: Introduced Dropbox Sign and Ironclad for Partner & Speaker Agreements
- ✓ Opportunity: Incorporate Opportunity for BOGS Award Winners to Respond to a Prompt
- ✓ Opportunity: Offer Immersive Opportunities in Local School Districts

Event Key Takeaways

- ✓ Continue Incorporating Student Voice on Mainstage
- ✓ Leverage Connections with Local School Districts to Enhance Conference Programming
- ✓ Dedicate More Networking Time
- ✓ Tell the Event Sustainability Story



Meaningful Collaborations

1

The Center for Green Schools, Market Transformation & Development, and Education & Events teams worked in concert to deliver a seamless conference experience.

2

USGBC engaged key stakeholders, including the Orange County Public School District along with local and regional governments.

3

Selected vendors partnered with USGBC to comply with sustainable guidelines related to sourcing all event materials including signage, food and beverage, registration materials, and more.

GSC Event Overview

School system staff and green building professionals gathered to celebrate 15 years of the annual convening created to inspire and facilitate the progress of the green schools movement.

EVENT DETAILS:

Orlando, Florida
Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista at Disney Springs
March 3-4, 2025

EVENT OBJECTIVE:

The Green Schools Conference is designed and delivered with three core pillars in mind: knowledge sharing, collaboration, and inspiration with a focus on innovation and interactive learning and heavy emphasis on place-based, destination-specific programming and show components.

GSC Program Overview

Most popular content with viewership/attendance

Top 3 Attended Sessions:

1. Reimagining Schools as Catalysts for Sustainable Systems Change! | **73 Attendees**
2. Building Resilient Schools: Harnessing Data for Sustainable, Safer Spaces | **73 Attendees**
3. Green Schoolyards from Pilot Project to Districtwide Implementation | **70 Attendees**

Top 3 Ranked Sessions:

1. NOAA: Leveraging Student Agency to Ignite Stewardship Initiatives
2. Enhancing Efficiency & Savings: Dumpster Monitoring at Portland PS
3. Funding a Greener Tomorrow: Finance and Tax Credits for Clean Energy

Top Ranked Speakers:

1. Amity Sandage 5.0
2. Alyssa Leadingham 5.0
3. Laura Arnow 5.0
4. Erik Makinson 4.91

Event Goals and KPIs

Goal 1: Expand participation in the CFGS' school district networks by attracting school district staff to high-quality experiences that foster deeper personal relationships with peers through curated peer-to-peer learning and unique "relationship-building experiences," leading to feelings of loyalty to USGBC, CFGS, and our programming.

Tactic: Incorporate targeted opportunities in the conference schedule for networking (sponsor to attendee; attendee to attendee), including speed greening and opening circles

KPI 1: +5% in green building professionals and school system staff (22% and 21% in 2024, respectively)

Result: Achieved, in part

SSS increased by 11%
GBP: 22% | SSS: 32%

KPI 2: benchmark SAT results for green building professionals and school system staff

Result: Achieved – SAT rates listed below

GBP: 4.67 (Response Rate: 15%)
SSS: 4.75 (Response Rate: 35%)

KPI 3: Track onsite participation via session scanning equipment for benchmarking

Result: Achieved

Speed Greening: 43% participation
Opening Circles: 47% participation
Closing Circles: 44% participation

Event Goals and KPIs

Goal 2: Through green event practices, build loyalty and trust as a sustainability leader in green business practices.

Tactic: Develop a conference specific sustainability program that highlights proven best practices and methods for conference execution, incorporates the local community and onsite attendee participation, and increases awareness of the conference's commitment to sustainability.

KPI 1: +5% increase in participation

Result: Not Achieved

Actual: 96% participation

KPI 2: increased communication of sustainability efforts onsite

Result: Achieved

Actual: incorporated details related to ingredient sourcing

KPI 3: % of goals achieved

Result: Achieved

Actual: 4 out of 6 (66%)

KPI 4: set baseline goals by reporting on 2025 actuals related to food & beverage sourcing and waste diversion

Result: Achieved, In Part

Actual: Hilton provided Meeting Impact report outlining waste, water, and energy use

USGBC

Event Goals and KPIs

Goal 3: Run a financially sustainable event, achieving revenue neutral or net-positive results.

Tactic: Exercise fiduciary responsibility and expense management for up to 5% profit margin

KPI 1: Sponsorship goal attained - \$189,500

Result: Not Achieved

Actual: \$91,175

KPI 2: Financial goals for event attained

Result: Achieved, pending final audit

Actual: Currently, event attained net positive results with a 5% profit margin

Event Goals and KPIs

Goal 4: Expand participants' knowledge and understanding of USGBC's products and services

Tactic: Connect registration data with relevant departments to ensure newsletter, add-on products, and membership interest is relayed to internal stakeholders. Incorporate other USGBC products including existing education content related to conference priorities.

KPI: 5% increase in USGBC/CFGS/GSC Website in response to "how did you hear about the event?"

Result: Achieved

Actual: +9% (59% in 2024, 68% in 2025)

KPI: 5% increase in GCP certificate program

Result: Not Achieved

Actual: -2% in GCP

KPI: encourage interest in USGBC

Result: Achieved

Actual: 21% expressed interest in learning more about USGBC

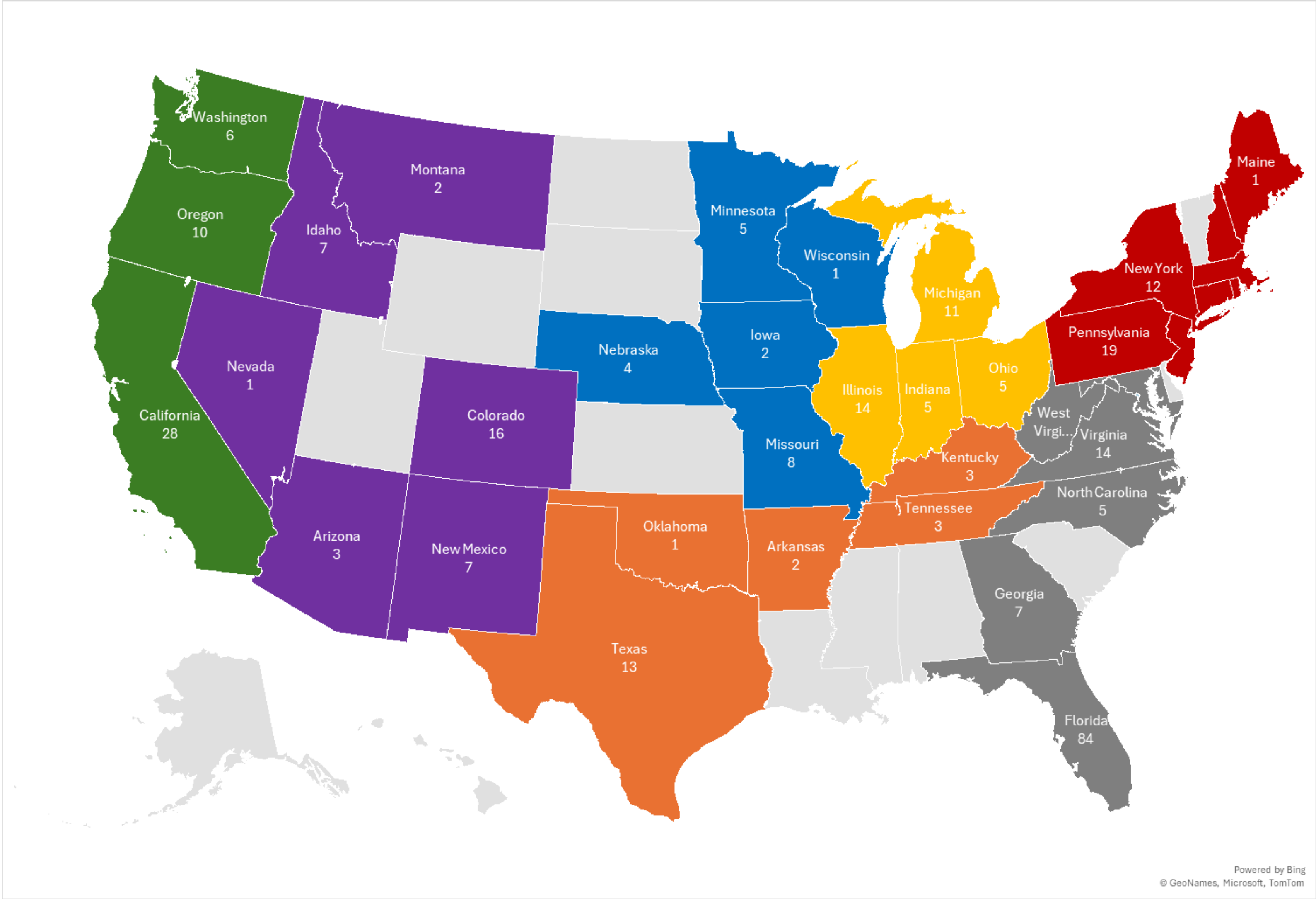
GSC Event KPIs

Year	Unique Registrants	Onsite	Professional Practices	States	Industry Sectors	Presenters	Credential Holders	GSNN & USGBC members	SAT
2023	437	412	32	42	18	101	12%	23%	81%
2024	530	495	25	42	16	133	10%	28%	97%
2025	370	359	24	38	15	90	12%	14%	94%

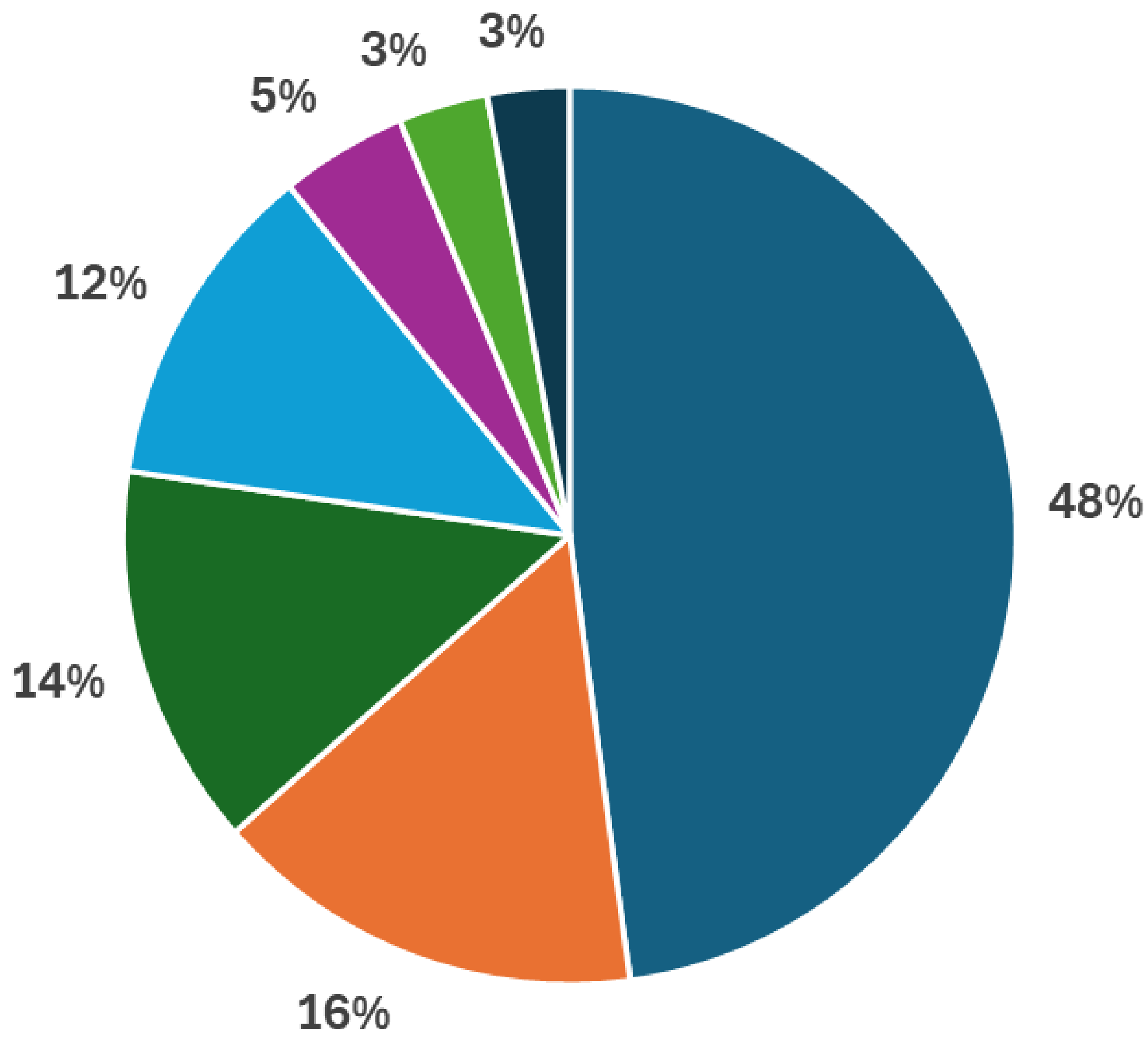
GSC Attendance

- **Attendance Goal: 400-500 attendees**
- **Actual Attendance: 370 registrants / 359 attendees** **92.5% Achieved**
- Insights
 1. Great check-in rate (97%)
 2. Government spending freeze reduced registrant count (more refunds than usual as well, 6)
 3. Registration behavior on par with historical trends (even split of early vs. Standard registration)
 4. Consistent brand loyalty year over year

Registrants by Communities - GSC



Registrants by Attendee Type - GSC



Registrant Type		
PreK-12	School/District/Gov't/Nonprofit	177
GSC Speaker		58
USGBC or GSNN Member		51
Sponsor/VIP		44
USGBC or GSNN Nonmember		51
Student/Emerging		
Professional		12
Student (K-12)		11

Equity of Access - GSC

	2023	2024	2025	% change (24-25)
Under Age 35	16%	23%	24%	+1%
% Students/EPs	1%	2%	3%	+1%
% K-12 Students	0%	1%	3%	+2%
% Female	62%	62%	68%	+6%
# Scholarships	7	10	3	-7
% First Time Attendees	70%	70%	62%	-8%
% Confidence Pricing Registrants*	N/A	N/A	16%	N/A
% Early Bird Registrants	44%	41%	33%	-8%
% Standard Registrants	56%	42%	43%	+1%
% Onsite Registrants	N/A	17%	7%	-10%

*New in 2025: GSC introduced Confidence Pricing

Registration – GSC Attendee Engagement

	2023	2024	2025	YoY
Session Views	14,353	20,650	21,273*	+623
Survey Response Rate	30%	40%	34%	-6%
Email Open Rate	72%	68%	68%*	0%
Average Engagement Score	1,586	1,301	1,355	+54
Event App Adoption Rate	87%	89%	87%	-2%
Check-In Rate	94%	93%	97%	+4%

*2025 Session Views & Email Open Rate is for both GSC & ADAPT

Sustainability

Event’s Long-Term Sustainability Goals and Legacy

Produce Zero Waste

Empower Stakeholders to Drive Change

Improve Sustainable Sourcing and Procurement

Incorporate Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing through All Event Strategies

Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Positively Impact Communities

Lead the Events Industry through the Advancement of Sustainable Event Management Initiatives

[Hilton Meeting Impact report](#)



Marketing and Promotion

Marketing & Promotion

The GSC heavily focuses on email marketing to promote the event.

The CFGS focused on three primary channels on social media: LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram.

The GSC also leverages articles on usgbc.org to share updates with the green building community.

The CFGS leverages both its newsletters, strategic relationships with promotional partners, and relies on the GSNN to support event promotion.

Marketing & Promotional Analysis

Event Goal: 400-500 attendees

Actual: 370 attendees

92.5% Achieved*

Marketing/Promotion KPIs

1. Registration
2. Onsite Attendance
3. Social Media Mentions
4. Email Open Rates

Email Engagement Metrics

Email Name and Date	Open Rate	Total Clicks	Opt Outs	Total Sent	Click Through Rate
05-07-24 GSC CFP	33%	162	4	7,564	2.09%
06-11-24 GSC CFP Reminder	33%	279	8	7,570	3.58%
06-21-24 CFP Extension	33%	106	7	7,574	1.31%
10-03-24 GSC Save the Date	43%	88	6	1,180	6.99%
10-15-24 GSC Sponsor	31%	14	0	149	9.40%
11-01-24 GSC Justification Toolkit	34%	209	8	8,340	2.41%
12-10-24 GSC Registration	44%	92	1	917	9.92%
01-14-25 School IAQ Research Convening	51%	69	2	182	36.81%
01-15-25 Sponsor GSC	39%	4	2	175	1.43%
01-22-25 GSC Keynote	37%	164	13	8,337	1.81%
01-22-25 Sponsor Reminder	35%	0	0	34	0%
02-20-25 GSC Keynote	32%	26	5	3,105	0.67%
02-24-25 GSC One Day Pass	32%	84	5	7,460	1.06%

Open rates for nonprofit emails average around 25.96%, while click-through rates typically range from 2.18% to 3.29%.

Social Media Engagement Metrics

Sources	Impressions	Engagement Rate (per Impression)	Engagements	Reactions	Comments	Shares	Post Link Clicks
Cross-Network	24,218	12.50%	3,027	937	25	104	1,716
Facebook	6,250	7.06%	441	133	10	29	27
Instagram	3,606	7.63%	275	256	4	12	0
LinkedIn	14,362	16.09%	2,311	548	11	63	1,689



Program Analysis

GBCI CEs & Education Session Ratings

GBCI CE Credit: GSC

2024 PROGRAM

31

Total GBCI credits available

22

Hours available via core program

9

Hours available via pre-conference tours

109

Total GBCI CEs distributed for GSC

2025 PROGRAM

37

Total GBCI credits available

26

Hours available via core program

11

Hours available via pre-conference tours

222

Total GBCI CEs distributed for GSC and ADAPT***

GSC Session Analytics

Session	Responded	Attended	Survey Rating
NOAA: Leveraging Student Agency to Ignite Stewardship Initiatives	12	32	5.0
Enhancing Efficiency & Savings: Dumpster Monitoring at Portland PS	16	54	4.84
Funding a Greener Tomorrow: Finance and Tax Credits for Clean Energy	15	69	4.8
Growing Environmental Justice Problem-Solvers Through 4PBL	16	43	4.78
Schoolyards for community resiliency & outdoor learning	8	70	4.78
How to Build a Living School	11	55	4.78
Creating Healthy Schools through District Wide Service Learning	16	50	4.76
Hiring and Structuring K-12 Sustainability Staff Roles	23	47	4.74
Growing Student Agency and Opportunity Through Place-Based Learning	22	37	4.73
Reimagining Schools as Catalysts for Sustainable Systems Change!	21	73	4.69
Building Resilient Schools: Harnessing Data for Sustainable, Safer Spaces	14	73	4.62
Climate, Sustainability, and Environmental Justice in Missouri Schools	14	35	4.6
Using A Design Charrette for Campuswide Learning Landscapes	12	35	4.58

GSC Session Analytics

Session	Responded	Attended	Survey Rating
Plug into resources and funding to electrify and decarbonize schools	16	59	4.56
The Economic Value of Green Schoolyards	9	43	4.56
Ready to Act: A Practical Guide to Climate Action Planning	16		4.54
Regenerative Vision: Centering Students and Community	10	42	4.5
Green Schoolyards from Pilot Project to Districtwide Implementation	26	70	4.48
Grow Your Own Districtwide Green Culture	19	60	4.42
Promoting Student Leadership in Green Infrastructure Projects	12	51	4.36
Ditching Disposables: A School District's Journey to Zero Waste	22	59	4.36
Highlighting Agency Initiatives in School IAQ and GHG Management	9	42	4.33
Climate Education: Preparing Students for a Sustainable Future	21	66	4.32
Using Schools as a Catalyst to Decarbonize Our Cities	10	57	4.31
Addressing the Gap: Student Climate Education	8	24	4.21
Utilizing Technology and Culture Change to Drive Sustainability	14	55	4.21
Data Innovations for Taking Green Schools to Scale in CA	11	42	4.06

GSC Opening Plenary



Dr. Maria Vazquez
Superintendent at OCPS



Lyra Littler
Brookshire Elementary School
Grade 5



Henrique Ribeiro
Freedom High School
Grade 12

Average Session Rating: 4.59

GSCxADAPT Joint Closing Plenary



Jothsna Harris
Change Narrative



Darien Clary
Austin Independent School District



Amanda Polematidis
Hanson Professional Services, Inc.

Average Session Rating: 4.62



Event Sponsors

Sponsor Overview

Total Sponsors: 40

- **Platinum: 3**
- **Gold: 2**
- **Silver: 7**
- **Green: 21**
- **Non-profit Speed Greening: 7**

14 companies sponsored more than one opportunity

Exchange: 16

Speed Greening: 23

40% of total sponsors participated in Exchange & SG
11 companies sponsored both Exchange & SG



Attendee Feedback



Susan Tenner

Brooklyn Urban Garden Charter School

This was my fourth and best yet GSC. The sessions were relevant to me. My favorite sessions were with Nicole Swedlow of Compass Education & the school visit and ending session with Jaimie Cloud on day 3. The movement is growing and the people are great to connect with and grow from.