



# Post-Event Report Green Schools Conference

# Post-Event Report

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# 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.

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## 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

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## 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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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

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**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

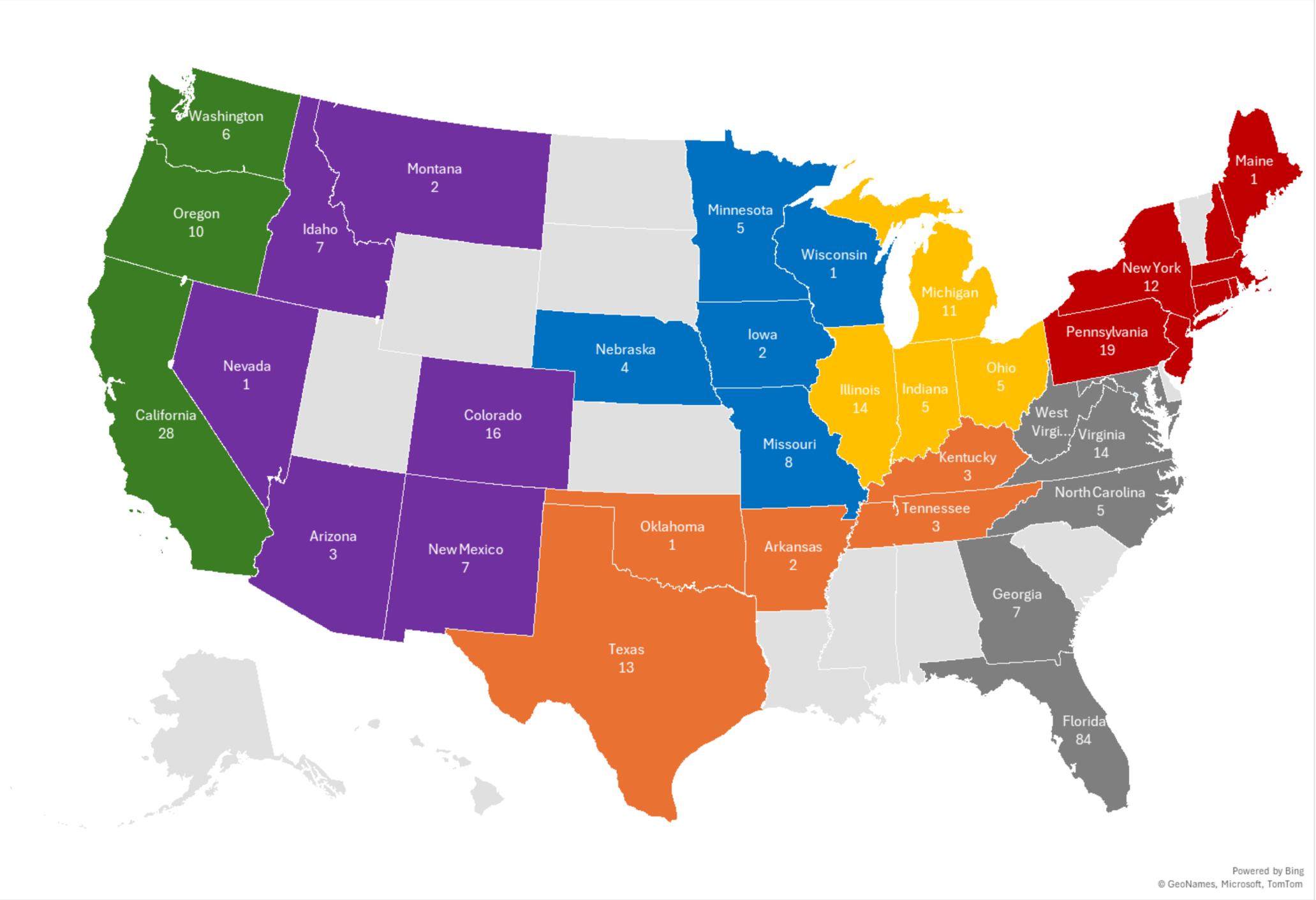
Year	Unique Registrants	Onsite	Professional Practices	States	Industry Sectors	Presenters	Credential Holders	GSNN & USGBC members	SAT
2023	437	412	32	42	18	101	12%	23%	81%
2024	530	495	25	42	16	133	10%	28%	97%
2025	370	359	24	38	15	90	12%	14%	94%

# GSC Attendance

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- **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

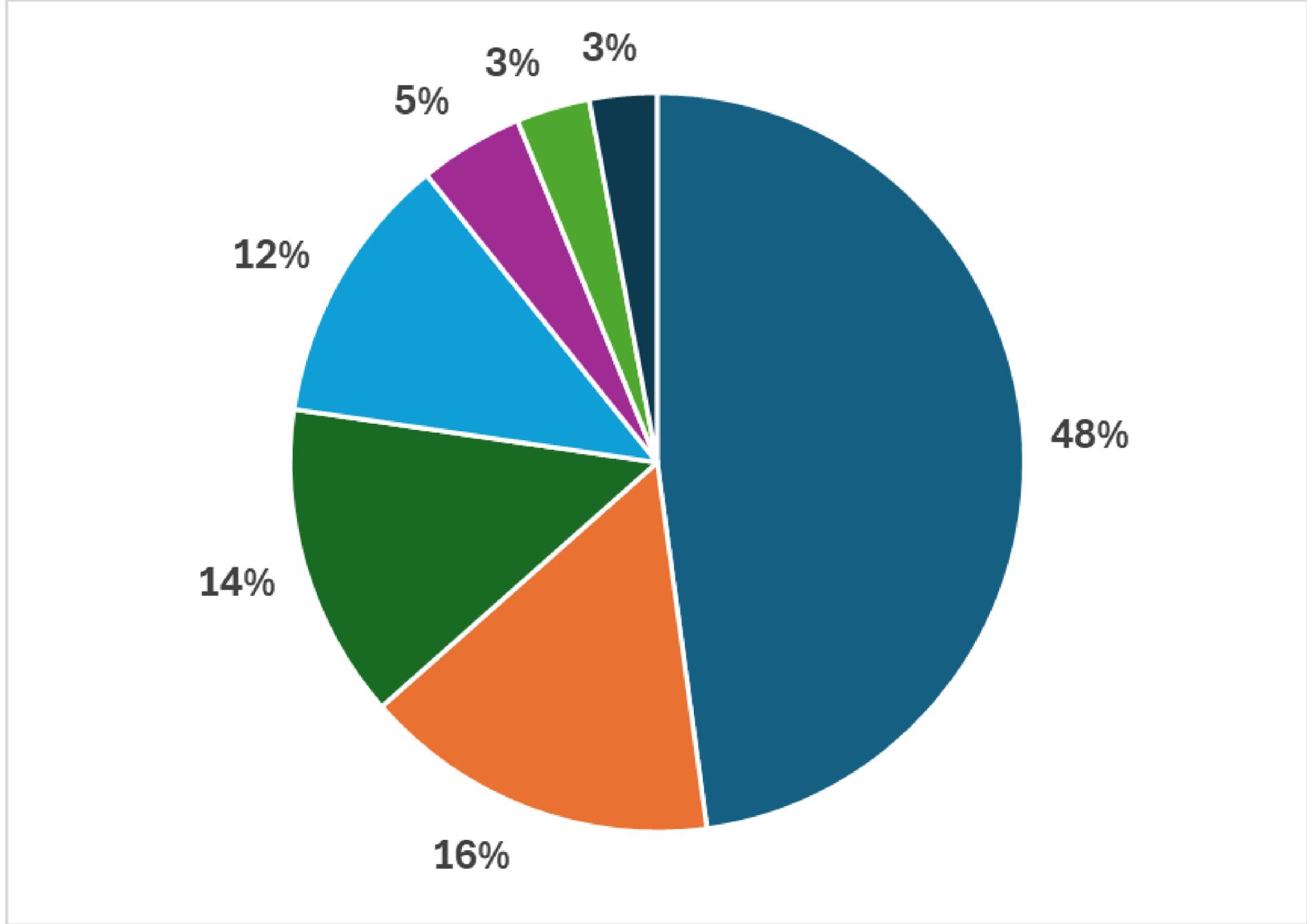
# Registrants by Communities - GSC



**US MTD Communities**

South Atlantic	134
Middle Atlantic New England	68
Pacific	44
Mountain	36
East North Central	35
South Central	22
West North Central	20

# 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

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## 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

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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

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**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

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**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.