



**Contact:** Stacey Hobart | New Buildings Institute  
[stacey@newbuildings.org](mailto:stacey@newbuildings.org) | 503-407-2148

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Zero Net Energy (ZNE) school awards seek to honor California innovation and leadership in zero net energy K-12 schools and community colleges**

**AUGUST 1, 2018**—With more than 60 zero net energy (ZNE) schools operating or planned, California is leading in the nation in driving K-12 schools and community colleges to ZNE performance. These projects represent high performance buildings that combine energy efficiency and renewable resources to produce at least as much energy as they consume annually. To honor early innovation and leadership in this market, New Buildings Institute (NBI), on behalf of California’s investor-owned utilities (IOUs) is calling for submissions to the ZNE awards and recognition program. The awards, now in their third year, will showcase the people, buildings and policies that are driving this new standard for school environments.

For the 2018 awards, NBI is seeking submissions by FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2018, in the following categories:

**Individuals & Teams:** Honoring the champions, individuals who inspire others on the path to ZNE and project teams that work effectively together to achieve ZNE goals.

**Districts:** Recognizing large and small districts that have created policies, programs, or plans that results in larger scale advancement of zero energy buildings.

**Outstanding Buildings:** Spotlighting ZNE verified, ZNE emerging and ultra-low energy projects at K-12 schools and community college campuses.

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## ZNE Schools Awards

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With California schools educating over 8.4 million students who spend [1,000 hours each year](#) in a school building, innovative design solutions are needed to drive standards for more healthy and productive learning environments. Schools built and renovated to ZNE performance provide healthy and productive learning environments, avoid expenditures on energy and operating costs, and can shift money saved on energy bills to students and programs. In addition, K-12 schools and community colleges are gaining momentum as they represent key opportunities for ZNE projects. New ZNE schools already exist in many states across the country and a variety of climate zones, with some of the best examples being built for the average costs of school construction. In addition, with the [Proposition 39 ZNE Retrofit Pilot Program](#), California is paving the way to showcasing the feasibility of ZNE retrofits in K-12 schools and community colleges. As local examples of the achievability and benefits of ZNE continue to increase, schools are an important platform to educate the broader public about sustainability, and demonstrate a commitment to reducing climate impacts.

The ZNE school awards will be presented on Oct. 29 during the [2018 Green Schools Summit](#) in Pasadena, California. Participation is open to individuals, teams, champions, school campuses and districts involved in a ZNE project. Applicants must demonstrate how their project is either achieving, or on track to achieve, ZNE performance, or is providing leadership for others to learn from. The winners will be selected based on review and evaluation from a committee of advisors with experience in sustainable design, high performance buildings, and zero net energy. See details at [www.newbuildings.org/ZNE-awards](http://www.newbuildings.org/ZNE-awards).

Those interested in learning more about ZNE schools, and particularly retrofits of existing schools to ZNE performance, can attend a post-conference [ZNE School Retrofit Training: Inefficiency is Old School: A Technical Deep Dive Into ZNE School Retrofits](#) on Oct. 30, after the Green Schools Summit. The interactive program is designed to help administrators and building professionals and others learn about the state's goals for ZNE, how to tap Prop 39 funding and how to apply the necessary design strategies and technology applications to whole-building retrofit projects. Register at <https://newbuildings.org/proposition-39-trainings>.

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### **ABOUT ZNE SCHOOLS IN CALIFORNIA AND PROP 39**

The [California Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan](#) has set ambitious goals for achieving zero net energy (ZNE) for all new commercial buildings by 2030. To support these ambitious state goals, a Proposition 39 ZNE School Retrofit Pilot Program is providing California's existing schools ZNE additional financial resources that can help transform some of the state's K-12 and community college buildings to ZNE. The ZNE Schools Awards program and training are part of this Proposition 39 pilot effort and is supported by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Diego Gas and Electric, Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas Company. The Proposition 39 ZNE School Pilot Program includes new schools retrofit case studies, ZNE trainings, and financial and technical support for a variety of school retrofit demonstration projects to showcase how existing K-12 school and community colleges can be transformed to ZNE performance.

### **ABOUT NBI**

New Buildings Institute (NBI) is a nonprofit organization working to improve the energy performance of commercial buildings. NBI works collaboratively with commercial building market players--governments, utilities, energy efficiency advocates and building professionals--to remove barriers to energy efficiency, including promoting advanced design practices, improved technologies, public policies and programs that improve energy efficiency. Learn more at <http://www.newbuildings.org>

