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Schools – Green and Clean

By Gayle Olson

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Now that you are settled back at school it is a good time to think about how you can help the planet by making your classroom and school environmentally friendly. Here are some ideas to get you started:

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Start a program to save the trees.

Did you know that paper comes from trees? Take good care of your books and they will last longer so other students will be able to use them. Use your paper carefully. Use the whole sheet (and both sides) of the paper for writing and drawing. Our pencils are made of wood from trees. The pencil will last longer if you press lightly when you write and be careful not to over sharpen the pencil when it breaks or becomes dull. Some desks and furniture is also made from wood products. Be careful not to damage these resources and materials and they will last a long time. If you use paper towels in the washroom use only enough that you need to dry your hands. If you use napkins in the cafeteria, you only need one. What else do you have in your classroom which is made from trees? How many ways can you think of to make them last longer?

Start a program to save energy.

Always turn off the lights if you are the last one to leave the room. Do you use an electric hand dryer in the washroom? Use it only long enough to dry your hands. Do you come to school by car? Why not start a car pool where children in your neighborhood can share rides.

Start a program to conserve water.

Run the water only long enough to wash your hands, when you are finished make sure to turn the tap tightly so the water doesn't drip.

Start a program to recycle.

Set up a recycle box for the paper you are finished with. Scraps of colored paper can be saved for future projects. When you have enough saved you can be creative with a scrap paper project. If you bring your lunch from home, only bring what you know you will eat. If you eat lunch at a cafeteria only order what you will eat. Wasting food is not good for the environment. Start a recycling program for plastic and metal containers. Have you grown out of clothes that are still in good condition? Pass them on to a brother, sister, friend, thrift shop, or charity.

Related Internet Resources:

<http://scienceforfamilies.allinfo-about.com/features/greenandclean.html>

## **Candidate Ford Proposes New School Site For Chicago Schools**

**By Patricia Hawke**

The old Brach's plant is located at 401 N. Cicero, just north of Lake Street, in a community that has seen many of its Chicago schools closed and others placed on academic probation. The 30-plus-acre property has been vacant for three years.

LaShawn Ford is the owner of Ford Desired Real Estate and candidate for state representative of the 8th district. The democrat has an ambitious plan to use the Brach property for a new school.

In June of 2006, Ford convinced Chicago schools' officials to join him in a walkthrough of his plan at the site. Though he had prior permission for the walkthrough with the Chicago schools' officials, there was no one present to give them access through the 30-foot fence that surrounds the property. As with most politicians, Ford improvised by driving through a hole in the fencing to gain access.

Chicago schools' officials found that the property was close to Chicago's Green Line, and it had some great parking space. Ford emphasized that a school located there could cater to many students from many areas of the city — Chicago schools' buses could transport students in from different districts. The Chicago schools' officials saw that the location and amount of property could attract a multitude of students with diverse economical, cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Ford further pointed out that the Chicago schools had recently invested \$30 million into Austin High School for Renaissance 2010 upgrades. He noted that had they foregone those renovations, they could had invested in a new school at the Brach location that would provide much more to the Chicago schools' students over the long term.

The biggest problem facing Ford's ambitious plans for the Chicago schools is zoning. The old Brach plant sits in the city's Protected Manufacturing District. That means that sites within the district can be used only for industrial development. When presented with other plans in the past, the city has been reluctant to rezone the area for commercial or residential development.

The second problem is financing. The property currently is listed at the Paine/Wetzel INCOR

International web site for \$10 million. The Chicago schools' officials have suggested that the best scenario would be for a donor to purchase the Brach property and give it to the Chicago schools for further development. Even this, of course, is contingent on whether or not the Chicago schools have enough surplus funds to build the school. The estimated cost of building is from \$20 to \$40 million. Of course, the perfect solution would be for donors to cover the cost of building, as well.

As it currently stands, Ford's proposal is being considered by the Chicago schools. The Chicago schools' officials stated that further study on the project would be needed before any decisions could be made.

Patricia Hawke is a staff writer for Schools K–12, providing free, in–depth reports on all U.S. public and private K–12 schools. Patricia has a nose for research and writes stimulating news and views on school issues. For more information on Chicago schools visit



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