



# Seeking Sustainable Success: ASQ Integrates Quality and Social Responsibility *in Primary, Secondary, and Higher EDUCATION*

## Summary

Education organizations that seek to be better positioned for the future understand the importance of addressing social responsibility through quality management and improvement tools that help reduce costs, improve efficiency, and have a positive impact on their communities.



**The American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC)**

ACUPCC was launched in 2006 to address global warming by achieving climate neutrality for campuses and developing the capability of students to help society do the same. By late 2009, some 650 schools representing more than a third of the higher education student population in America have joined the commitment.<sup>viii</sup>

Social responsibility (SR) is defined as the “responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behavior that:

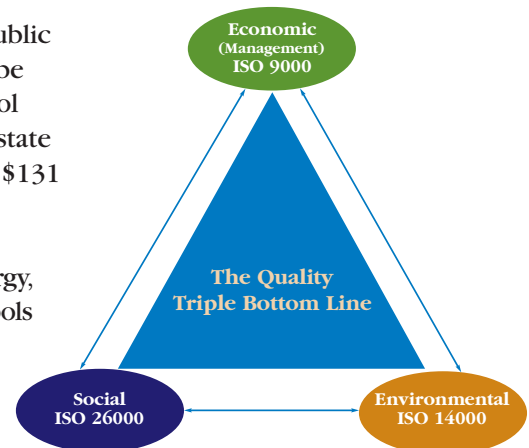
- Contributes to sustainable development, including health and the welfare of society;
- Takes into account the expectations of stakeholders;
- Is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior; and
- Is integrated throughout the organization and practiced in its relationships.”<sup>i</sup>

No matter the size or focus of the educational entity—whether primary and secondary, community college, higher education, or work force developers—organizations that seek to be better positioned for the future are working to understand the importance of addressing SR through quality management and improvement tools.

## Education Impact

SR’s key elements often are referred to as the triple bottom line—social, economic, and environmental measures. These issues profoundly impact the education community. For example:

- **Economic:** Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools will be about \$543 billion for the 2009-10 school year.<sup>ii</sup> In public higher education alone, state and local revenue plus tuition provided \$131 billion in 2008.<sup>iii</sup>
- **Environmental:** Colleges and universities spend close to \$2 billion each year on energy, and America’s primary and secondary schools spend \$6 billion—more than is spent on textbooks and computers combined.<sup>iv</sup> The carbon dioxide emissions produced as a result of most energy generation has been proven harmful to the environment. And studies show that there may be as many as 37 million jobs from renewable energy and energy efficiency in the United States by 2030.<sup>v</sup>
- **Social:** More than 58 million students attend primary, secondary, and higher education institutions in America,<sup>vi</sup> and educational services is the second largest industry in the country, accounting for about 13.3 million jobs.<sup>vii</sup>



ASQ refers to the quality triple bottom line as the integration of social, economic, and environmental measures. Performance and results improve as the view and cultural integration of quality expands.



[www.asq.org](http://www.asq.org)  
[www.TheSRO.org](http://www.TheSRO.org)

It's important to note that the three elements of SR often are intertwined. For example, Florida State University in Tallahassee has developed energy conservation initiatives such as efficient lighting that also have resulted in improved indoor learning environments for students, reduced the environmental impact of its facilities, and provided utility savings of nearly \$12.5 million. Students have the opportunity to research sustainable campus initiatives and share their results with the community on a special Web site.<sup>ix</sup>

The education community is addressing SR in these areas:

- **Operations:** Integrating SR into its practices, from governance and endowment investments to sustainable facilities and fair trade supply chains. The result is lower utility costs, more productive employees, and stronger communities.
- **Curriculum:** Integrating SR into classes, from curriculum subject matter and green collar job preparation to service learning and community outreach. The impact is students who know how SR can make the world a better place—and help them find a job.
- **Research:** Integrating SR into applied research, especially in engineering and business. The outcome is a rigorous analysis of SR practices.

Because of improved technology and processes, education-related organizations are finding tremendous opportunities in these issues.

## Growing Interest

Addressing SR in operations, curriculum, and research is growing in importance for many reasons.

- **Students increasingly are interested in social issues.** Some 66 percent of the 15,722 respondents to *The Princeton Review's* annual "College Hopes & Worries Survey," said that "they would favor having information about a college's commitment to the environment and that it may impact their decision to apply to or attend the school."<sup>x</sup>
- **School administrations understand the need for SR.** The Association of School Business Officials International has developed a major focus on SR since more than 92 percent of its members said their school districts were interested in it.
- **Instant online communications means instant information.** Students, parents, suppliers, the media, donors, and others can quickly and easily learn about an organization's good reputation and practices—as well as bad decisions, scandals, and poor policies—and spread the word. Stakeholders want to see demonstration of SR measurements and read clear reports on environmental, social, and financial factors.



### **Cleary University, Howell, Michigan**

*Cleary offers an MBA in Green Business Strategy that emphasizes development and application of a broad set of skills to prepare students with the knowledge they will need to lead or work in green organizations.*

[www.cleary.edu](http://www.cleary.edu)

- **Educational standards reflect SR in the community.** The recently released Educational Leadership Policy Standard 4.0 (ISLLC 2008) notes that "An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources."<sup>xi</sup>
- **SR is an important factor for employees.** More than one-third of respondents to a survey conducted by *Personnel Today* said that working for a caring and responsible employer was more important than the salary they earned. As many as 44 percent of respondents said they would discount an employer that had a bad reputation, while nearly half said SR policies should be compulsory.<sup>xii</sup>
- **Current environmental legislation is bringing environmental issues to the forefront.** Global, federal, state, and local government regulations may even require institutions and companies to measure, report, and reduce GHG emissions, and voluntary efforts are giving those entities a head start.

## Multiple Benefits

As ASQ works with educators, administrators, and affiliated industries to promote quality in education from primary and secondary through higher education, as well as helping institutions of education to increase student achievement and outcomes and improve operational performance, SR is playing an important role in helping organizations:

- Attract and retain students and employees.
- Contribute to better learning environments and outcomes.
- Improve operations in key areas of efficiency and cost reduction.
- Develop a consistent approach to triple bottom line issues.
- Provide reporting and transparency.
- Encourage quality practices through measurement and continuous improvement.
- Strengthen a college, school, or company's brand image and awareness.
- Improve and diversify the supply chain.
- Improve risk management.
- Better understand and serve the local community.
- Initiate authoritative research into SR's multidisciplinary areas, including science, business, and engineering.

## ASQ Tools

Here are some ways ASQ tools can help education organizations connect to quality and SR through models, standards, and data-based decision making:

- **Continuous Improvement:** Evaluating SR in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and developing targets for improvement.
- **Lean Methods:** Showing how creating more value with less work and less waste can reduce environmental and social impacts on students, employees, and communities.
- **Six Sigma:** Developing statistical methods to identify and remove the causes of defects and errors in social, environmental, and financial issues, and creating a special infrastructure of people to address the concept within the organization.
- **Baldrige Criteria:** ASQ administers the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award under contract to the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The Award criteria ask for information about how businesses and organizations consider the well-being of environmental, social, and economic systems to which they contribute. Education organizations increasingly use the criteria as a guide, especially since the market gained its own category in 1999. <sup>xiii</sup> (See Page 4 for an example of a Baldrige-winning education organization and its commitment to SR.)
- **Education:** ASQ holds an annual Quality in Sustainability Conference to inform professionals about SR issues. It also helps those involved in environment, economics, and SR to engage in quality principles and practices. Other training,



## Social Responsibility at Parkway High School, Philadelphia

Since Parkway embraced a theme of SR, new courses, projects, and learning activities have led to an increase in test

scores. These experiences teach students to care about one another, to critically examine violence and social justice issues, and to foster skills and adopt actions that will help resolve social problems. <sup>xiv</sup>



conferences, and online courses provide the tools, technology, and resources necessary to carry out the voluntary guidance and measure effective results in areas such as:

- Developing and communicating the economic cost of sustainability
- Integrating quality and environmental management systems
- Building a quality management program around the LEED® rating system

- **Leverage partnerships:** Globally, ASQ has formed relationships with other organizations that have comparable missions and principles. Its international strategic alliances are helping to address SR needs of organizations and individuals worldwide.

## Conclusion

A growing body of evidence asserts that SR helps organizations differentiate their brands and reputations as well attract top talent. Additionally, an increasing demand for transparency, tracking of environmental issues such as GHG emissions and water use, preparation for climate change impacts, and other potential challenges are making organizations understand the need for measurement and management.

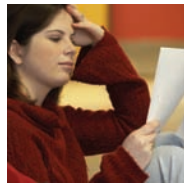
Combining SR with quality tools that increase critical thinking and problem solving skills, improve service, and reduce waste and errors can provide an integrated solution for tackling challenges and driving performance that results in multiple benefits for students, organizations, and society.

By tapping into ASQ resources, the sector as a whole will benefit, as will individual schools, organizations, and the students they serve. And that ultimately benefits society.

## ISO 26000: Guidance on Social Responsibility

ASQ serves as the U.S. Technical Advisory Group secretariat for ISO 26000: Guidance on Social Responsibility, which the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is coordinating globally with 90 other countries. ISO 26000 is a guideline that can be integrated into best practices—not a certification; and it is intended for all organizations and sectors—not just corporations. While ASQ embodies and supports all seven subjects, initially it is concentrating on the areas that will deliver the greatest value to the quality community by focusing on three elements: organizational governance, environment, and community involvement and development. ASQ is aligning its body of knowledge and competency in waste reduction and customer advocacy to provide information on areas that quality can truly impact.





## Online Resources

### ASQ/SR

#### The Socially Responsible Organization

[www.asq.org/edu](http://www.asq.org/edu)

[www.TheSRO.org](http://www.TheSRO.org)

Fosters a sense of community and connection around SR through sharing stories, experiences, and values, and by providing printed and online successful practices, case studies, and tools.

### The Environment

Green Schools Alliance

[www.greenschoolsalliance.org](http://www.greenschoolsalliance.org)

Collaborative for High Performing Schools

[www.chps.net](http://www.chps.net)

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

[www.aashe.org](http://www.aashe.org)

### Social Responsibility

Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility

[www.teachablemoment.org](http://www.teachablemoment.org)

### Baldrige Award

[www.baldrige.nist.gov](http://www.baldrige.nist.gov)

### ISO 26000

[www.iso.org/sr](http://www.iso.org/sr)

<sup>i</sup> ISO 26000 Draft International Standard, September 2009 – <http://www.asq.org/knowledge-center/standards/index.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Natl. Center for Education Statistics – [www.nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372](http://www.nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372)

<sup>iii</sup> State Higher Education Finance Organization – [www.sheeo.org/finance/shef\\_fy08.pdf](http://www.sheeo.org/finance/shef_fy08.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> EPA Energy Star – [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=k12\\_schools.bus\\_schoolsk12](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=k12_schools.bus_schoolsk12)

<sup>v</sup> ASES Green Collar Jobs Report – [www.ases.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=465&Itemid=58](http://www.ases.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=465&Itemid=58)

<sup>vi</sup> NCES – [www.nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372](http://www.nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372)

<sup>vii</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics – [www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs034.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs034.htm)

<sup>viii</sup> Presidents Climate Commitment – [www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/html/list\\_state.php](http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/html/list_state.php)

<sup>ix</sup> Case Study – [www.johnsoncontrols.com/publish/etc/medialib/jci/be/case\\_studies.Par.17401.File.tmp/FSU%20CS.pdf](http://www.johnsoncontrols.com/publish/etc/medialib/jci/be/case_studies.Par.17401.File.tmp/FSU%20CS.pdf)

## Iredell Statesville Schools — 2008 Baldrige Award Winner in Education <sup>xv</sup>

Iredell-Statesville Schools (I-SS) is a K-12 public school system of 21,000 students and 3,400 employees located within a diverse community in southwestern North Carolina. The local Board of Education has developed 17 strategic performance measures and more than 100 leading indicators—several of which are linked to SR—that are tracked and reported on a weekly or monthly basis.

The Board relies on quality tools such as using data from other Baldrige-based systems to develop a community survey that gauges feedback on stakeholder trust. Survey respondents indicated involvement and support of the local communities were key to passing a successful bond referendum in 2005, the first since 1947 to require a tax increase. An outgrowth of the referendum was the formation of a community leaders group, Citizens for a Brighter Future, which meets with school officials on a quarterly basis to provide input on many social and economic issues.

I-SS's results are aligned with many aspects of the SR triple bottom line:

**Economic:** I-SS is recognized across the state for collaborating with county commissioners to develop a funding formula for capital and operating budgets, as well as long-range enrollment projections, facility planning, and strategic plan for the county. These activities have led to increased confidence in fiscal accountability of I-SS from the community and stakeholders as measured in the annual surveys. A strategy to involve key partners in obtaining grants to impact strategic goals has resulted in more than \$8 million in grants being awarded in the last three years.

**Social:** In addition to regular stakeholder surveys, the district works to engage other entities within the community, such as offering students dual-enrollment opportunities in an early college setting. I-SS is working with the Statesville City Council and the Blumenthal Center for Performing Arts to establish a performance and fine arts magnet school and with the Boys and Girls Club to provide after-school enrichment activities for at-risk students.

**Environmental:** The district has used the same environmentally sound floor plan to facilitate healthy, responsible environments for learning. It also has implemented a program to save energy as well as educate students and staff about the benefits of energy efficiency. The Energy Education program has resulted in a 20-percent savings totaling more than \$4 million in savings, and I-SS has been recognized as being in the top 5 percent of school systems nationally for energy conservation. The I-SS prototype for elementary school facilities has been recognized nationally as one of the top models for green schools.

<sup>x</sup> *Princeton Review* 2009 "College Hopes & Worries Survey" Findings – [www.princetonreview.com/uploadedFiles/Test\\_Preparation/Hopes\\_and\\_Worries/colleg\\_hopes\\_worries\\_details.pdf](http://www.princetonreview.com/uploadedFiles/Test_Preparation/Hopes_and_Worries/colleg_hopes_worries_details.pdf)

<sup>xi</sup> Council of Chief State School Officers – [www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/elps\\_isllc2008.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/elps_isllc2008.pdf)

<sup>xii</sup> *Personnel Today*. "Corporate social responsibility is more important than salary when choosing a job." [www.personneltoday.com/articles/2007/08/02/41767/corporate-social-responsibility-is-more-important-than-salary-when-choosing-a-job.html](http://www.personneltoday.com/articles/2007/08/02/41767/corporate-social-responsibility-is-more-important-than-salary-when-choosing-a-job.html)

<sup>xiii</sup> Baldrige Criteria – [www.baldrige.nist.gov](http://www.baldrige.nist.gov)

<sup>xiv</sup> Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development – [http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational\\_leadership/jul09/vol66/num10/A\\_School\\_for\\_Peace\\_and\\_Justice.aspx#fn1](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/jul09/vol66/num10/A_School_for_Peace_and_Justice.aspx#fn1)

<sup>xv</sup> Baldrige Application – [www.baldrige.nist.gov/2008\\_Application\\_Summaries.htm](http://www.baldrige.nist.gov/2008_Application_Summaries.htm)

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