

[The Arizona Republic](#)

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Corona del Sol High School students will get a visit Thursday from U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell.

Mitchell, D-Tempe, a former Tempe Union High School District teacher, is touring the school to see renovations the district has made to improve the building's air quality.

While the district continues its work over the next year to upgrade the school's heating and ventilation system, district officials say the renovations done over the summer offer a "temporary fix" to lowering carbon-dioxide levels that exceeded state standards. But new carbon dioxide readings will not be available until the Arizona Department of Health Services completes its environmental testing at Corona, in another month or so.

"The congressman obviously has an interest in this. He wants to see what's been done and what's left to do," said Robbie Sherwood, a Mitchell spokesman.

In June, the Arizona congressman shone a national spotlight on the health and safety of Corona students and staff. On the House floor, Mitchell discussed the district's inability to secure state funding for renovations to lower carbon-dioxide levels at Corona.

He successfully lobbied for an amendment to House Resolution 3021, the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act. The bill, which passed the House and awaits a Senate vote, provides some \$20 billion in federal grants to help states pay for renovations of public schools that fail to meet energy efficient or "green" environmental standards. Mitchell's change would allow schools that do not meet local and state health codes to also apply for the federal funds.

Mitchell told his colleagues that in his home state, Tempe Union was struggling to pay for a heating and ventilation system that was in "desperate need of replacement."

"Students and teachers should never have to compromise their health and safety to attend school, and this legislation will help prevent this from happening," he said.

The state Legislature and Gov. Janet Napolitano worked out a July budget compromise that will allow the district to borrow \$12 million from the ventilation system upgrades. The loan details are still being worked out.

Sherwood said Mitchell hoped the Corona renovations have resulted in a safer environment. The congressman, Sherwood added, will continue to lobby for the future federal funds HR 3021, if passed, could make available to schools such as Corona.