



B-R schools to lower energy use

Published April 17, 2008

The Reporter Newspaper (Somerville, NJ)

Section: EDUCATION, Page: A15, Estimated printed pages: 2

The Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District has made a commitment to reduce energy consumption in district buildings by implementing a program called SEE, Schools for Energy Efficiency. SEE provides no-cost and low-cost strategies and activities to help lower schools' energy costs. The program is designed for K-12 schools as a systemized plan promoting efficient facility operations and changing behavior through energy awareness.

The district's goal is to achieve a 10 percent reduction in annual energy use and earn an EnergyStar award from the Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA named the district an EnergyStar Partner in October.

"The rapidly rising cost of energy made the district examine how energy is used within its facilities," Superintendent Michael Schilder said. "Through utility tracking, we will be able to see how the SEE program is helping us reduce energy in our schools. We're looking forward to seeing positive results throughout our school community."

SEE was launched in the district in October with an awareness campaign theme of "You Have the Power." District staff and students will be empowered to make simple changes in day-to-day activities that will help save energy and cut down on pollution and the use of nonrenewable resources. Visual reminders, e-mail blasts and newsletters will instruct everyone to save energy in classrooms, gymnasiums and throughout buildings.

The district also established an Energy Steering Committee which met for the third time on Feb. 5. The group is in the process of creating policy for energy use in the district.

"A district-wide energy policy will be the driving force to help us achieve our 10 percent energy reduction goal," Schilder said.

The district began its energy awareness focus several years ago when increasing enrollment necessitated construction at nearly every school. Milltown Primary School, the newest in the district, was built in 2005 utilizing LEED construction standards; LEED is an acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. Photovoltaic systems were installed in 2006 on the roof of Milltown Primary School and Eisenhower Intermediate School to generate electricity for use in those buildings.

"The SEE program is yet another step the district is taking to conserve energy and taxpayer dollars," Schilder said.

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