

Highland Park School District

Highland Park, Middlesex County

The Highland Park School District took the initiative in all schools to teach students why it is important to save energy, explaining the difference between renewable and nonrenewable energy sources, and demonstrating ways to cut back on energy. Each school recruited students to be “Vampire Hunters” and remind faculty to unplug unused appliances. Each school bought energy efficient appliances and replaced incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs. All schools closed early on Fridays in the summer to conserve. The district purchased new energy-efficient copiers in all schools and reduced the number of copies used in the classroom. Copier costs, including toner, staples and services, were reduced. To conserve power the printer screens are set to go to sleep after an interval of non-usage. In addition, the technology services manager has provided tips for free paper-saving software that can be downloaded to help save paper.

Students beginning in grades K-5 relied on teachers to volunteer their time to train students how to conserve energy either during class or after school. At the high school and middle school level, extracurricular groups were allowed to create posters to hang around the school and provided incentives to praise/ admonish energy users.

The high school and middle school used energy efficient appliances and recycled non mandated materials. By purchasing 180 Chromebooks in the high school and nearly 150 in the middle school, students submit papers and homework via email. Several teachers place assignments, lecture notes and handouts online. This has enhanced the paperless initiative in both schools. Replacing very old windows, caulking, and using weather stripping were also important in conserving energy. Staff and students at Bartle Elementary School now communicate without using paper 90 percent of the time; during the 2013 school year, they did so 50 percent of the time. Teachers were asked to forgo product catalogs and purchase supplies from companies that have websites or page-flipping catalogs and online ordering. To further the paper-saving efforts, students’ notebooks were made from recycled paper and both sides of the paper were used. Rather than work out math equations or create brainstorm lists or do other in-class activities on paper, students used small white boards with ultra low-odor dry-erase markers. Some marker brands were even made from recycled materials and are refillable, too. The primary school now has geothermal energy, a source of renewable energy. In addition to the energy conservation goal the district also conducted water efficiency audits, identified and stopped leaks in all buildings, installed rain water barrels, and upgraded water fountains by using refilling stations awarded through grant opportunities.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE

Reduce energy consumption by **5%**

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

ability to build capacity
value vertical alignment
and support
organizational goals

“ WORDS OF WISDOM

Assess the existing momentum and lead the team through active participation. Active participation may include face-to-face meetings, monthly calls, announcements to all staff, curriculum development, community engagement and approval of professional development.

Tracey M. Maiden,
2nd Grade Instruction ”