



Southwest Energy Efficiency Project

Saving Money and Reducing Pollution through Energy Conservation

Press Release

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FROM: Suzanne Pletcher, (303) 447-0078 ext. 5
RE: Clark County School District Saves BIG money

Cash-Strapped Clark County School District Saves \$10,000 per day with NV Energy Partnership

LAS VEGAS--Jackie Efros is starting off the new school year by teaching sixth-graders in her science classes at Schofield Middle School how to use state-of-the-art technology to learn. When a student asks a question, she doesn't directly answer it. Instead, she hands the student an iPad and teaches him how to find the answer online.

Jackie has an iPad in her classroom thanks to a \$4,280 award for reducing energy costs that came from the Clark County School District (CCSD) general fund. The Las Vegas district—fifth largest in the nation and hard hit by the nation's financial recession--is serious about lowering energy bills at its 357 schools and 40 administrative offices. Schools that can show they've reduced costs below a baseline receive back a portion of the savings, earmarked for classroom support.

But the iPad, and Schofield, are a small chapter in the much larger story of how energy savings are translating into saving schools in CCSD. In fiscal 2011, the district earned \$791,000 in utility rebates for reduced electricity use and saved another \$2.3 million on its enormous \$40 million per year utility bill. The savings boost a depleted general fund and literally keep the lights on in some of the district's cash-strapped classrooms.

Ironically, lights are exactly where the 2012 savings came from. NV Energy, which provides electricity to 93% of Nevadans, partnered with the school district on every step of a process that retrofitted high-efficiency lights in 150 of the district's schools. They started with older schools that had the least efficient lighting.

NV Energy sees itself as a close partner with CCSD, said John Hargrove, NV Energy's renewables program manager who oversees the utility's Energy Smart Schools Program. "CCSD is one of our largest customers," he said.

“Since lighting retrofits usually have the most bang for the buck in terms of cost and energy savings, NV Energy worked closely with the school district over several years, pushing forward a lighting retrofit project that would save the district \$10,000 *per day*.

The school provided \$2 million for the retrofit project. NV Energy provided a \$1 million rebate along with expertise from its own technical and engineering staff. After three years of trying, the project came together. The actual retrofits, which occurred in two phases, only four months.

“It’s a huge, huge project,” said Hargrove of the 365,000 lighting fixtures that were replaced. “We helped them through every step of the process and were in the field doing inspections for them every day.” In 2011, the team finished the first two phases of lighting retrofits before district funds for the project were exhausted. The project’s third phase is currently on hold.

Andy DuMond, program manager for CLEAResult and project manager on the CCSD lighting retrofit, said the first two phases saved 21.5 million kilowatt-hours of electricity. NV Energy pays a \$3.30 rebate for every 100 kilowatt-hours of electricity saved, so CCSD’s rebate for the lighting retrofit was more than \$700,000. The savings of \$2.3 million on the district’s utility bill not only paid for the school’s cost of the lighting retrofit but will continue to improve the bottom line of the general budget for years to come.

DuMond pointed out other benefits besides energy savings. For instance, the district will save maintenance dollars since staff won’t have to change out lighting fixtures in the retrofitted schools for approximately 10 years, he said. The new lights don’t generate as much heat as conventional bulbs, so air conditioning costs are reduced. And though kids in Jackie Efros’ science class—engrossed as they are in learning—won’t notice it, the project engineers installed new lighting with a better color rendering to improve the learning environment in their classroom.

“It’s tremendous for us,” said Dick Cuppett, director I energy manager for CCSD. “Any savings we can get from utility bills stays in the district’s general fund for use in the schools.” Cuppett is serious about saving energy and money. He employs four “night rangers” who work from midnight to 8 a.m. and rotate through each school in the district, checking for lights, computers and heating or air conditioning systems left on. Schools that are energy efficient, like Schofield, are rewarded with a kickback on their cost savings.

Ultimately, everyone wins, said DuMond. Every kilowatt-hour that is saved is one less that the

utility has to produce and that ratepayers have to help pay for. Since school district budgets have taken a beating, every dollar saved on electricity costs can help pay the salaries of teachers and bus drivers, as well as buy textbooks and iPads.

NV Energy and CCSD are masterminding another project that would save \$750,000 a year in energy costs by automatically backing up and turning off computers that have been left on. They are hoping that the utility rebate for the project--\$330,000—will cover the full cost of the contractor and software installation.

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