

*Springboro Community Schools  
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# **Moving Ahead With Energy Improvements**

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When it comes to utility consumption there is no bigger consumer than Springboro Community Schools. It is not that the buildings are inefficient or measures are not taken to improve things. On the contrary, the district has instituted a number of energy-saving measures and we are looking into some others that will help improve the efficiency of the buildings. Some of the measures already taken include:

- a) Switching out light fixtures in the older buildings to a style that uses 60% less energy.
- b) Replacement of the heat pumps in the Junior High School to more efficient units.
- c) A more efficient water-cooled cooling tower was added when the additions were made to the High School.
- d) Digital control systems that allow us to fluctuate the temperatures in the building so we are not heating and cooling at a normal level when the building is not being occupied.
- e) Improved air filters that scrub the air better but place less resistance, thus we need less energy to move the air through the building.
- f) New thermostat plugs on the bus heaters that only heat the engine when it gets below 30 degrees.
- g) Waste oil from the community and our own buses is used to heat the bus garage.

These are just a few of the programs we have instituted but these are not enough. I hear from the community over and over about their frustrations related to how many lights are left on in our facilities. We are going to start an education program with our staff and students next year on the ways they can help us save energy. Lights, windows open, comfort level in the room and communication about faulty equipment are all ways we are going to look to improve on next year. All of these are a small part of the total energy equation. The biggest part of the utility bill is tied to the motors and pumps in the buildings that move air and water throughout the building. As part of the federal stimulus money we all have heard the funds that are being made available to use alternative energy

sources. A little known part of that funding was the dollars that are being set aside to improve efficiency. We are getting in line for a number of grants and funding opportunities that will allow us to control our peak energy use times. By controlling these peak times we can get better rates throughout the rest of the year on our utilities. An example of this would be the use of emergency generators at some of the buildings on high usage days (they run on natural gas) to lower the amount of electricity we use holding down the rate we pay for the rest of the year.

These are just a few examples we are working on to save money. I am always willing to take suggestions and would welcome any experts we have in the community to participate in a new "Green Team" we will be forming. This group would not only be responsible for evaluating our energy consumption, but also the cleaning products we use, the soaps in the restrooms and the paper products we are using to insure they are good for the environment and also cost effective. If you have an expertise in energy or environmentally friendly products we would love to hear from you. It is the hope that this committee will be eligible for some of the Energy Star awards from the EPA and Federal Department of Energy and qualify for some of the LEED Certifications.

Please email me if you have suggestions and/or would like to help.  
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