

Fairfax County Public Schools Energy Management Program

OVERVIEW

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is the **largest public school system in Virginia** with 235 facilities totaling 28 million square feet. In 2014, FCPS initiated a system of practices to **create a culture of energy performance awareness**. This Energy Management Program used quantitative tools tracking energy use and cost savings to inform decision making practices based on energy conservation. Energy Education Specialists are the FCPS employees tasked with involving all members of the FCPS Energy Education Team to **ensure efficient and effective stewardship of public resources** (both economic and environmental) **by continually striving to reduce district energy use and cost without negatively impacting health and safety, the educational environment, or productivity**. The FCPS Energy Education Team includes all students, staff, parents, and other community members who make up the totality of individuals who utilize FCPS sites.

The cultural shift to energy conservation has resulted in tangible outcomes:

- **Conserving energy, thereby reducing cost,**
- **Cultivating good communications on energy matters,**
- **Developing and maintaining effective monitoring, reporting, and management strategies for efficient energy usage,**
- **Finding new and better ways to increase returns from energy investments through research and development,**
- **Developing interest in and dedication to energy management program from all employees,**
- **Utilizing instrumentation to monitor indoor air quality, and**
- **Improve comfort and safety.**

The **Virginia Energy Efficiency Council**, a member-based 501c3, launched the Energizing Efficiency Campaign in 2023 to further the mission of advancing EE across the state by showcasing incredible work being done in our communities and inspiring others to act. Learn more at VAEEC.org/Energizing-Efficiency-Campaign.



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CHALLENGES

Over the decade, one of the key challenges of the FCPS Energy Management Program has been the need to adapt to organizational shifts. **Creating strategic change takes time, discipline, and patience. The ability to adjust to the natural changes of Facilities Management takes another level of skill.** Over the years of the program, the Energy Education Specialist (EES) has become the face of Facilities Management. Staff, Administration and Techs have come to rely on the EES for information, support, and education. The Energy Education Specialist motto has become, "How can I help?", and **what was initially a challenge has become the vision for the program.**

One of the primary goals of FCPS Facilities Management is to do everything possible to reduce operating and other support costs to allow the School Board & Superintendent to devote resources to the primary mission - instruction. The Energy Management Program is a successful part of this overall strategy.

RESULTS

The energy tracking software, EnergyCAP, allows FCPS to **benchmark and analyze** utility bills, providing an understanding of all necessary data points to manage energy consumption, reduce carbon footprint, and drive savings. The numbers show how deeply woven and progressive the energy conservation program is at FCPS.

Energy consumption has systematically reduced during the period 2014 to 2022, from 314 million Kwh to 262 million Kwh, and from 7 million therms to 5 million therms. This energy efficiency has resulted in a **cost avoidance of over \$74 million.** The Energy Reduction Impact is over 3,000,000,000 KBtu, and over 240,000 metric tons of CO₂e. This is equivalent to over 6 million seedlings grown for 10 years.

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