

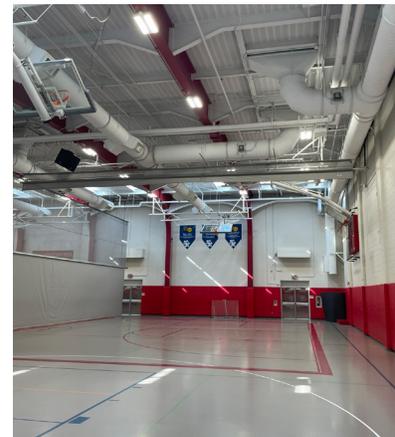
Going from **GOOD TO GREAT** with PECO Ways to Save

The Owen J. Roberts School District invested in significant upgrades to its schools to improve academic performance and help the community's future.

Going from GOOD TO GREAT with PECO Ways to Save

The Owen J. Roberts School District in Chester County, Pennsylvania, serves over **5,400 K-12 students**¹. The district's mission is to move from **Good to Great** in every aspect of education.

They applied this mission to elevate their students' overall academic experience and improve the academic infrastructure: classrooms, buildings and facilities. The district also sought to uphold its motto: "Do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason." With guidance from PECO Ways to Save, the district applied this ethos to pursuing energy efficient strategies and savings.



LED Lighting Upgrades

From March to September 2023, the district upgraded its lighting to LEDs throughout the middle, high and four elementary schools. These PECO Ways to Save incentivized lighting upgrades resulted in an **estimated savings of 840,725 kWh and \$219,560 in incentives.**

District Director of Facilities Mike Shelgren said, “The older fluorescent lighting took a lot of manpower to maintain. These new LED fixtures are virtually maintenance-free while providing a better quality of light.”

The district also leveraged **PECO Instant Discounts** previously to purchase LED lighting fixtures to upgrade the lighting in one of its libraries, receiving point-of-sale discounts at a participating distributor.

HVAC, VFDs, Chillers, Controls and Building Envelope Improvements

In December 2023, the district also upgraded some of their HVAC systems from constant-speed air handlers to variable frequency drives (VFDs) that modulate fan speed and reduce energy consumption in response to increased or decreased heating and cooling demands.

According to the district’s assistant director of facilities, Aaron Rothrock, thanks to the HVAC upgrades, they can now control the temperature in the space better.

The HVAC upgrades saved an **estimated 7,160 kWh and \$3,765 in incentives.** Equally important, and the impetus of the upgrades — the students benefited from a better, more comfortable learning environment.

Rothrock said, “The incentive check is more money put back into the school district for books, computers, anything else. It’s money we wouldn’t have had that would have come from other [budgets].” He continued, “It provides a direct cost-savings benefit to the community.” Shelgren added, “As we save money on energy costs, we’re able to factor those cost savings into the annual budget we present to the families we serve.”

Solar Panels

Previously in 2012, the district installed **525 kW of solar panels**² on the middle and high school’s roofs. The panels generate an estimated 30 percent of the energy needed for the two schools and the administrative buildings. However, the district’s staff is equally committed to reducing energy consumption as they are to producing green energy. But their story doesn’t end here.

Rothrock said, “We are focused on reducing our carbon footprint. That includes fixing and upgrading existing systems to maintain or increase their efficiency. Rather than adding additional systems that require maintenance and upkeep, we’re committed to making positive improvements that are sustainable.”

Chiller Upgrades

Finally in 2023, the district pursued chiller replacements at several of its schools. One electric chiller was near end-of-life. The district wanted to avoid a situation in which failure would result in no cooling at the school. Maintenance of a gas chiller in another school was costly, and the parts needed for required maintenance were difficult to source. New chillers were selected based on recently installed chillers in two newly built elementary schools. The recent chiller replacement in the high school achieved consistency in operations, maintenance and energy efficiency. Rothrock said, “There were days in the past where the chiller went down, and we were scrambling, and now we don’t have to worry about that.”

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¹ nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/district_detail.asp?ID2=4218270

² thereporteronline.com/2012/11/16/ojr-flips-switch-on-solar-energy/