

HARLANDALE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, TEXAS

A Case Study of Energy Efficient Purchasing Practices

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Harlandale Independent School District

The school system in the state of Texas, like many other states, is broken up into independent school district. The Harlandale Independent School District (HISD), located in the San Antonio area is a typical example. Harlandale consists of 23 schools and serves nearly 15,000 students. As suburban areas are growing rapidly, Harlandale, like other suburban school districts, is regularly building new schools.

The Harlandale Independent School District was selected as a case study because it is representative of a large number of Independent School Districts in Texas. HISD has also taken some innovative steps in installing energy efficient and renewable energy technologies.

Harlandale illustrates what school districts can achieve if they incorporate energy conservation into procurement decisions.

For example, HISD recently installed a GeoExchange heating and cooling system at its administrative building. GeoExchange, also known as a geothermal heat pump, is an excellent example of the purchase of an energy efficient technology.

There are over 109,000 schools across the nation. A recent market analysis estimates that schools occupy approximately 5 million square feet and consume over 2.9 million kWh annually. More importantly, since schools are grouped in districts and coordinated on a state level successful energy efficient applications can be copied across the district or state.

Schools represent an important market for energy efficiency. The southeast, including Texas claims the largest percentage of schools (32%) in the nation.

Energy Efficiency Procurement Policies

Harlandale Independent School District's success with energy efficient technologies is largely dependent upon energy champions within specific departments or schools. Since the procurement process is largely an administrative, the decision to select energy efficient depends almost entirely upon the willingness of energy experts to advocate for purchases.

For example, the decision to install geothermal heat pumps was largely due to the commitment of HISD's energy manager, Oscar Perez. Mr. Perez led the initiative to

install a GeoExchange heating and cooling system on a retrofit of the Administration building. This is likely to be the first of many such retrofits of the technology within the district.

One school had standardized air conditioning, lighting and other equipment to high efficiency standards

In contrast, another energy manager, Kyle Blankenly, once served as Energy Manager for the School District set up a policy for equipment. This policy even included an incentive program for the purchase of energy efficient technologies. Unfortunately, this program has since been discontinued, with the departure of that energy official.

Thus, the Harlandale Independent School District (HISD) illustrates the pivotal role that energy champions play in the procurement of energy efficient technologies.

Without an energy champion to advocate equipment procurement initiatives, there is little incentive for other departments to tackle this subject. The lack of incentive to conserve energy is a central concern for the department. Since utility bills for all of the buildings are paid centrally there is no recognition on a building personnel level of the importance of energy conservation. This was why the incentive program was established and considered helpful.

Harlandale Independent School District also illustrates the opportunities that exist for initiatives to encourage energy efficient purchasing within school districts. One possible approach may be to re-establish its incentive program to encourage energy efficient installations.

Another idea under consideration is to implement a cooperative purchasing program among area school districts. This initiative would include standardizing the purchase of high efficiency models for computers, copiers, lighting and HVAC.

As a result of the interviews conducted as part of this case study, the Harlandale Independent School District indicated an interest and a willingness to pursue this matter more fully.

In summary, this case study highlights the enormous potential that exists for energy efficiency procurement initiatives. The school district has the willingness to adopt new technologies; now it just needs the guidance to capitalize on these opportunities.