

Top 5 Ways Energy Performance Contracts Advance the Goals of School District Administrators



School District Administrators today must manage many competing priorities. It's tempting to want to delegate any and all appropriate decisions to your staff. Certainly, that would include anything having to do with energy efficiency? Not always.

Energy Performance Contracts (EPCs) have enjoyed a surge in popularity in recent years. The benefits, however, are not only about saving energy. The advantages touch every aspect of your operation.

Here are some surprising ways EPC's advance the goals of School District Administrators:

1. EPCs improve the learning environment.

Does your district suffer from classrooms that are too hot or too cold? Do you have poor, degraded lighting in classrooms and/or gyms where students take standardized tests? Did you know that fluorescent lighting has a "flicker" that can be disruptive to special education students? **The negative impact of these conditions is real**, and is undermining your efforts to give your students the best chance to succeed.

The most common building conditions corrected through EPCs are poor lighting, faulty temperature controls, and inadequate ventilation; bringing your buildings into full alignment with student success.

2. EPCs reduce taxpayer burden.

Think you have to continually increase taxes in order to get substantial capital work funded? Not with an EPC. **NYS Energy Law Article 9** outlines the rules for EPC projects. The most important requirement is that the projects be self-funding and taxpayer neutral. The project

scope must be funded 100% out of guaranteed energy savings that the upgrades will yield over time. The result is that the taxpayers will enjoy, in many cases, millions of dollars worth of energy-related upgrades, such as boilers, lighting, windows, doors, roofs, and more, without having to pay a penny more for them.

In our experience presenting to dozens of Boards of Education over the past two decades, the reception that EPC projects receive from the community, especially when their financing is explained, is tremendously positive.

3. EPCs provide relevant, exciting opportunities for student engagement.

An often unknown aspect of EPC projects is the enormous educational component they offer school districts. If desired, you may request that educational materials be provided by the Energy Services Company (ESCO) to your science teachers that explain, for example, the solar installation that was installed through your EPC and its impact on your utility bills. Additionally, you may request a web page that is linked to your solar panels be developed and highlighted on your district homepage, to let the community know the contribution that system is generating. We have also experienced districts benefit from the ESCO establishing a competitive challenge between schools to see which can become the most efficient from a behavioral perspective, as an extension of the EPC.

Our next generation is excited about how they can reduce our impact on the environment. You can offer them a fun and educational way to learn more about the example your school district is setting by taking advantage of the educational opportunities provided through an EPC.

4. EPCs demonstrate the administration is proactive and sensitive to the environment.

Communities are more energy-aware than ever, and although not every community is insistent that their school district “go green” and adopt resolutions to help combat climate change, many are. There is no other, more comprehensive way to make a serious reduction in your district’s carbon footprint than to engage in an EPC project.

The EPA recently published a report stating that our nation’s school districts are spending \$6 billion in energy, and 30% of that energy is used inefficiently. Coincidentally, the average reduction in energy spend after executing an EPC is 30%. Think of the power and influence you have as a school district administrator to make a serious positive impact on our environment!

5. EPCs represent a clear opportunity to demonstrate vision and leadership.

As a district administrator, your community is relying on you to provide leadership and vision for their educational system across all areas. With all the day-to-day events and matters that arise, it can be a challenge to both identify and launch the kind of impactful, transformative programs which produce results that can be easily quantified. EPC projects are a way to do this.

With simply a board vote, you can achieve not only greatly enhanced energy efficiency, but also educational, environmental, and fiscal benefits that will benefit your school community both immediately and for many years to come.

