

ACTION PLAN

KEEP NR 734

Rosemary Broeren
Parkview Elementary School
Chippewa Falls

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1. Action Plan Summary

The purpose of this proposed action plan is to put awareness of energy consumption “out there” for both the staff and students at Parkview Elementary School. I was the sole participant in this class from my school and I couldn’t help but be reminded of what *goes around comes around*. I started my teaching career in 1976, right at the height of the energy crisis in the country. I only recently discarded my energy conservation curriculum files that were so much a part of heightening awareness of the problem in the classroom.

Participation in this class brought all those practices from the late 70’s back to me. I must admit that we have gotten away from the focus with the general population. With this in mind, I’d like to get the approval of our principal to utilize both staff and students. (I teach 5th grade.) My students will be involved in learning about energy consumption, then will survey the building, looking for areas that could use improvement. The findings will be presented to the staff and ideas brainstormed as to how to get everyone involved with working toward our goal.

It might be fun to work toward an “incentive” to reducing the dollar amount of our school’s energy bills. There will also be the opportunity to earn money for Parkview by presenting “The Bright Idea” fundraiser to our PTO. This will, also, help raise everyone’s awareness of the role we can all play in the area of energy consumption.

2. Introduction to the Audience

Parkview Elementary School opened for the 1995 – 1996 school year. It is a K-5 school with 490 students, taking the place of the two oldest elementary schools. It is the largest elementary school (and way too large—in my opinion) with four sections of each grade plus the district’s CD population. Our students come from diverse families, from homes on the lake to the city’s low-income housing development. The school building was built as two wings—K-2 and 3-5 –that meet in the center “Central Park” area, which is clustered around the office space and two gym areas and kitchen.

Each classroom has a recycling bin for paper and cans and plastic are recycled. But there are no concerted efforts in place to make sure lights are turned off in areas not being used. We do have a district-wide daily automatic shut-off of staff computers.

3. Statement of Problem or Need

During this class, I learned that Parkview Elementary averages \$121.00 a day for electricity. The January 2005 amount owed to Xcel Energy was \$3,605.44. I have to admit that I never thought about this before, and found it interesting. I assume everyone else in the building would, too. Being a staff member for five years leads me to believe that there can be much that can be done to reduce this bill. Knowing the 5th grade spirit of commitment, I can foresee the level of “ownership” that my class will take in the leadership position of this project. What an educational experience!

4. Project Goals and Objectives

* There will be an increase in the awareness of energy consumption and the necessity of conservation.

* Citizenship and stewardship are part of our “Parkview Pride” character education component. This will help teach that actions do speak louder than words and hopefully will help develop the necessity of active participation for the betterment of the community.

* A good public relations opportunity through local newspaper and television coverage that will help with community involvement.

* Involvement will help meet several science, social studies, environmental education and technology education state standards (See pages 38 – 46 in Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program guide.)

* Students will be given further opportunities for public speaking and developing leadership skills.

* Students will use their creative, artistic and writing skills to keep the focus of this project *out there*.

* There will be the opportunity to develop attitudes that will carry over to students’ homes, and hopefully throughout their lives.

* There will be the opportunity to earn money for our school through the district “rebate” from savings on our energy bills and the fundraiser of selling energy-efficient bulbs.

* This advocacy should also go hand-in-hand in developing the intrinsic benefits of using less energy throughout our school.

* Ultimately, the goal is to make Parkview a more energy-efficient school.

5. Methods and Timeline

To make this a reality, it has to be made to fit into the current curriculum. Much of the background learning will fit in nicely with our math, especially with the predominant role of graphing. Social Studies is US history, so stories from the past will provide much opportunity for comparison and contrast. Much will be whole-class involvement, but I can foresee working with the GT department in the formation of an “Energy Watchdog Club.”

Our first science unit is concerned with conservation, the specific curriculum is water protection and conservation. The Green and Healthy School Water Section Assessment fits in beautifully with the present curriculum. Late in September, there is a district-wide 5th grade Conservation Day at Lake Wissota State Park. One station is energy focused. Bringing that back to the classroom will flow throughout the Fall using some of the classroom activities that I received from this class. The student-led Green & Healthy School Energy Section Assessment will take place and will be presented to the staff, along with a history of our energy bills. The idea of a “Christmas gift” of working on ways to reduce bills throughout the winter months will then be presented.

I’d like to pursue the possibility of approaching the school board with the possibility of them “rebating” back to the school any dollar amount saved on our monthly energy bill from the year before. This money would be used for some other educational or energy-saving purpose. January would be a good time to have the PTO light bulb fundraiser.

Fifth graders would be involved in developing some classroom activities for the younger grades. A “challenge” could also be put forth for creating signs and reminders around the school. Perhaps a classroom door-decorating contest can be held.

We have had a parent-sponsored poetry contest for the fifth grade the last few years. Next year’s contest can have an energy conservation focus.

We would also take part in the Energy Education Bookmark contest and will include providing bookmarks for our LMC, and possibly for the community library.

I have worked with the school’s music teacher in the past on the 5th grade music program. I am sure that she will gladly pursue an energy-related theme.

6. Evaluation Criteria and Process

The success of this project will be measured in various ways.

Curriculum: Guarding precious classroom time, how can it fit into present curriculum? Where can substitutions be made? This is necessary in order to get other teachers “on board.”

School-Wide Climate: How successful were we able to permeate the whole school community in this effort? That is the question that will have to be continually asked.

Decrease in Energy Consumption: Receiving the cold, hard facts—did our efforts result in lowering our energy bill?

Financial Success: What are the results of the “rebate” program and the PTO fundraiser? What will the money be used for?

Beyond the Classroom: Testimonials from parents will tell of the impact of the program into the home.

Past energy bills will have to be requested so comparisons could be done. Students will produce a comparison in a large format for the bulletin board in the Central Park area showing both consumption savings and dollar savings. Periodic updates and reminders can be part of morning announcements.

7. Budget

At this time, and with this format, I don’t think any funding is needed to implement this plan. All materials needed will be available at school, or can be purchased with PTO classroom funds—at least initially.