



**MINNESOTA: Schools for Energy Efficiency® (SEE)
ENERGY STAR Program Area: K-12 Education & Energy Conservation**

Program Summary: [Schools for Energy Efficiency](#)® (SEE) is a comprehensive program designed for K-12 schools to save energy and money by changing behavior throughout the district. Participating schools have seen immediate and sustainable results with annual energy use reduction ranging from 10-20 percent and most schools achieving national recognition through ENERGY STAR awards.

Program Description and Development: The SEE program helps guide school districts through a unique approach using strategies for both efficient facility operations and engaging energy awareness materials for staff and students. The comprehensive plan begins by empowering everyone in the school district to make changes in day-to-day habits to save energy. SEE provides a multi-year plan with training, materials, utility tracking and support required to manage an energy efficiency program in a school district. The goals encourage districts to reduce energy use by 10 percent, engage students and staff, and achieve ENERGY STAR status for building or district-wide improvements in efficiency. The SEE program was developed in 2002 by [Hallberg Engineering, Inc.](#) of Minnesota in response to school district client's need for a flexible, self-implemented plan to help realize immediate savings in energy use as well as develop a long-term culture of energy efficiency. The program began as a pilot in a few Minnesota districts with the support of the State Energy Office and today is applicable throughout the country.

Resources and Investment: A school district's investment in the program is an annual participation fee for services and materials. A staff position titled, Energy Efficiency Coordinator, serves as the one point of contact to implement the program for all schools. Both of these costs are recouped with the energy cost avoidance savings from reduced energy use. The SEE program is not a guaranteed savings contract and no capital investments are required.

Energy Saving Benefits and Results: In less than five years the 250 schools reporting current results have seen an annual energy use savings range from 10-20 percent with a total of \$10 million dollars in avoided utility costs so far. More than 100 SEE school facilities have achieved energy performance that would qualify them for an ENERGY STAR Label. In addition, 13 SEE school districts, out of only 32 in the nation, have received ENERGY STAR Leader awards for continuous improvement in energy efficiency. In total, participating SEE school districts have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 845 million pounds of CO₂. In 2007, the SEE program was recognized as an ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year- Service and Product Provider and expanded beyond Minnesota adding school districts from Louisiana and New Jersey for 150 new schools conserving energy. Currently the program works with 400 schools and continues to grow.

Lessons Learned: SEE staff attribute success of the program to beginning with a united, compressive plan supported by expert assistance. With this systemized plan in place the support and commitment from the administration creates active involvement and accountability for the entire district. Communities have embraced schools energy savings success and community taxpayers have recognized the district efforts to be both fiscally and environmentally responsible. SEE has also proven that while a school may have upgraded equipment, such as lighting with more efficient designs, there is still further savings potential through a behavioral approach. Lastly, with the difficulty districts have in using school operating dollars to fund this program the business decision becomes easier knowing that the avoided costs will provide an immediate and continuous supply of money to this operating fund through utility cost avoidance savings.

Contact Information

Doug Karnuth
Schools for Energy Efficiency
651.783.5630
dkarnuth@seeprograms.com

