

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

Wicomico County Public Schools Maximizes Earnings Through Seasonal Enrollments

Wicomico County Public Schools (WCPS) comprises 25 K-12 schools in Maryland, with a range of facilities built in the 1930s through the early 2010s. The school district has an eye towards energy sustainability: WCPS built its first LEED-certified school in 2015 and already has seven ENERGY STAR certified school buildings. The district's facilities house approximately 14,500 students and more than 2,700 additional staff.

Keeping costs down and budgets in line is a particularly daunting challenge in Maryland given the volatility of local energy markets. WCPS's Energy Manager, James Urbanski, and Mark E. Miller, CPPO, CPPB, C.P.M, WCPS's Energy Supply Manager, knew they would need to bring in external expertise to determine how the District's 25 schools managed their demand response (DR) participation and energy purchasing strategy.



DR PROGRAM
PJM Emergency Load
Response Program



DR EARNINGS
\$120K annually



Optimizing seasonal aggregation and peak demand management

The first tenet of WCPS's energy management program is to provide a quality environment for students to achieve their highest academic potential. Enel X worked with WCPS to design demand response energy reduction strategies that would go mostly unnoticed by students and staff, such as slight adjustments in HVAC system settings and turning off nonessential lighting.

Now that PJM has shifted to a year-round program, a new component of the WCPS energy strategy is managing peak demand charges in the summer months and enrolling more MW in demand response in the winter. Enel X's large portfolio of PJM customers makes that kind of seasonal variation possible.

As a result, WCPS continues to earn \$120,000 in demand response payments annually. "You start bringing in some checks, and that gets people's attention," says Urbanski.

Managing budget and risk exposure

WCPS is a founding member of the Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium Energy Trust (ESMEC-ET), an energy purchasing cooperative founded in May 2001 for the region's schools and other government entities.

In addition to demand response, Enel X's team of energy supply management experts helped design a purchasing strategy that matched WCPS's budget and risk profile, advising ESMEC-ET to switch from a retail fixed-rate purchasing strategy to a sub-account strategy that enabled ESMEC-ET to purchase energy directly on the wholesale market. Enel X provided the expert guidance and transparency required to navigate the complicated purchasing strategy. Miller notes, "As a government entity, knowing the approximate cost of next year's electricity is important."

The Enel X team continues to advise WCPS on its energy management strategy, including market conditions, energy purchasing strategies, and budget recommendations. It also helps the district comply with the State of Maryland's Green Energy requirements.

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—James Urbanski, Energy Manager for Wicomico County Public Schools