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NEEP guide can help schools save money

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A new guide published by Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) can help school districts and other building owners save money with little to no capital investments by implementing techniques that keep a building operating at peak performance.

The Northeast Collaborative for High Performance Schools (NE-CHPS) Operations & Maintenance Guide contains strategies that will help schools reduce their operating costs, as well as lead to healthier indoor air, greater energy efficiency and environmental benefits, and overall improvements in the learning environment for students and staff.

The guide comes at a critical time in the economy as many districts move away from building new schools and seek to cut costs and implement energy efficiency and conservation strategies in their existing schools. Developed by regional stakeholders, with input from state departments of education and efficiency programs, the guide is available for free online.

The guide provides advice on a comprehensive range of topics from energy and water efficiency in a school, to incorporating renewable energy systems, as well as technologies for improved indoor environmental quality. Additionally there are detailed guidelines for implementing environmentally friendly policies and practices for existing buildings such as anti-idling policies, recycling programs, using green cleaning agents, and developing training for building operators.

The NE-CHPS Operations and Maintenance Guide is a companion piece to the NE-CHPS Protocol. The Protocol provides a set of guidelines for the construction and renovation of K-12 schools in a manner that provides for enhanced learning environments, energy efficiency, and low environmental impact.

"This manual focuses on the Northeast and is an extremely valuable tool," says Karen Verrengia, Energy Manager for Cranston Public Schools in Rhode Island. Cranston's recent effort to reduce energy in schools has yielded \$2.4 million dollars in savings. "I will be passing on copies to our administration, foremen, senior custodial staff and school committee members while staying involved in the process of shaping the guide and advocating for its implementation," Verrengia says.

"I think the NE-CHPS Operations and Maintenance Guide will be very useful in Vermont, where new school construction has slowed in past years and existing schools are the focus," says Cathy Hilgendorf, School Construction Coordinator of the Vermont Department of Education. "Working in tandem with Efficiency Vermont and the Vermont Superintendents Association's School Energy Management Program, this tool will help Vermont's existing school buildings achieve greater energy efficiency and improve learning environments across the state."

"Above all, a high performance school provides an environment that enhances the primary mission of public schools: the education of future citizens. Together the Northeast-CHPS Protocol and the Operations & Maintenance Guide provide strategies for the construction or renovation of a school to

high performance standards, and the tools for schools to continue reaping the environmental and cost benefits of a high performance school for many years to come," says Carolyn Sarno, NEEP's Senior Program Manager, High Performance Buildings. "Saving money while improving the environmental and physical health of students, and accelerating energy efficiency is our ultimate goal."

The NE-CHPS Operations & Maintenance Guide along with tools and advice for building or renovating a high performance school can be found on NEEP's website. Visit <http://neep.org/public-policy/buildings/high-performance-schools/omguide>.

Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) is a regional nonprofit organization founded in 1996 whose mission is to promote the efficient use of energy in homes, buildings and industry in the Northeast U.S. through regionally coordinated programs and policies that increase the use of energy efficient products, services and practices, and that help achieve a cleaner environment and a more reliable and affordable energy system. For more information, visit www.neep.org.

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