

News release



Oct. 16, 2014

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Middle school students learn why “Energy Matters”

District joins community partners to build science, technology, engineering and math skills (STEM) and kick-off energy education initiative

How do we use energy? How can we conserve energy? Why should we care? What does that have to do with students’ education today and tomorrow?

On Oct. 22, 2014, North Middle School students in Everett Public Schools will delve into activities to explore these questions. Partnering with Washington Green Schools, The Boeing Company and Snohomish County PUD, Everett Public Schools will kick-off *Energy Matters*, an initiative advancing energy education and conservation in schools throughout the district.

Over 650 North Middle School students will engage in STEM-based energy activities in their science classes throughout the day. Through hands-on learning experiences with Boeing volunteers and a school-wide assembly, students will explore energy use and choices, learn about energy careers, and become advocates to use energy wisely at school and at home.

A coordinated effort between several community partners, this kick-off day and the program it launches is designed to increase students’ awareness about the science behind energy and about energy conservation and related career possibilities.

Superintendent Gary Cohn notes the vast potential for STEM-related careers students have by doing well in school today and building skills and learning for tomorrow.

“Representatives from Washington Green Schools, Boeing and the PUD will be guest teachers in science classrooms. They will work side-by-side with our science teachers, using curriculum developed in partnership with our district. In doing so, students will not only learn and practice 21st century skills, but see how that learning and further school success can lead to college and career pathways.”

Washington Green Schools Executive Director Meredith Lohr explains, “The goal is to work with every school in the district on this energy conservation program. We are

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building tools and resources that connect student learning opportunities to resource conservation in schools. We hope those experiences carry through to the students’ futures.”

Almost seven out of ten North Middle School students qualify for free and reduced school meals. “For a good number of our students, college and high-paying careers may seem out of reach,” says Principal Mary O’Brien. “We know that is not the case, and this program brings people and experiences to illustrate that learning today and planning for tomorrow can change the future.”

North Middle School art students are already designing an *Energy Matters* poster that will symbolize this continuing energy-awareness work throughout the district and state.

A key component is an energy dashboard that the students can use to follow and measure energy consumption in participating schools.

Boeing is partnering with Washington Green Schools on this work. Boeing employees will be active participants in North’s classroom activities and the afternoon’s school-wide assembly. Boeing is also replacing the old, energy-hogging refrigerators in the staff room with three Energy Star-approved refrigerators.

“We’re privileged to be able to bring this focus on energy to the classroom as a part of the *ENERGY STAR Change the World Community Tour*,” said Boeing Energy Director Keith Warner. “We hope these activities will encourage the girls and boys at North Middle School to think about future careers in science, math and technology. There are great opportunities in these fields waiting for them.”

Boeing is sending each student home with an LED light bulb, and each classroom will receive a conservation kit at a \$60 value. Principal O’Brien smiles at the *light bulb moment* represented in the PUD gift to each student. “Students learn about symbolism in our literature classes. How perfect that a modern, energy-efficient light bulb will go home with students this day as not only a symbol of the ‘ah ha’ moments in class, but as a practical, useful tool to put those learnings to use. Thomas Edison must be smiling too.”

Washington Green Schools is piloting the *Energy Matters* initiative this year at North Middle Schools and nine other schools in the district, including:

Cedar Wood Elementary
Forest View Elementary
Hawthorne Elementary
Henry M. Jackson High School
Jackson Elementary
Jefferson Elementary
Mill Creek Elementary

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North Middle School
Silver Lake Elementary
View Ridge Elementary

They’ll also work with Cascade and Everett high schools this year.

Everett Public Schools’ ongoing Resource Conservation Management (RCM) Program integrates with the district’s STEM curriculum and the *Energy Matters* initiative. The district’s RCM Program has a specific focus on energy conservation and is partnering with the community organizations to support this effort. Everett Public Schools emphasizes energy conservation as a standard practice since 1980 when the board approved the district’s energy policy.

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