



DR. MATT A. BISCEGLIA

01/01/10

Dear Cromwell Community Members,

A recent article in the *Hartford Courant* caught my eye as well as the attention of some Cromwell residents. The story was about West Hartford's district wide energy saving efforts and the work of a third grade student in helping his school win the school district's energy challenge for November. The day after the article appeared, I received an email from a concerned Cromwell resident asking about what the Cromwell Public Schools are doing to conserve energy. The e-mail mentioned specifically that the writer has observed many lights that can be seen on in the schools on any given night throughout the district. Both the article and subsequent e-mail inquiry have provided the perfect opportunity to enumerate the many ways Cromwell Public Schools have been addressing the issue of energy conservation. Before I do, however, I'd like to address the issue of having lights on in our schools in the evenings.

We are fortunate in Cromwell to have four schools that not only serve the children of our town, but also many, many other groups as well. As I've stated on previous occasions, our buildings are used both day and night, not only by CPS faculty, staff, and students, but also by the many youth and community organizations throughout Cromwell. There is literally not a night that goes by without all of our facilities being used for events such as school or town sporting events, musical programs, PTO, recreation department programs, building committee and Board of Education meetings, or individual Open houses and parent conferences. This incredible building use schedule also continues throughout the weekend. Additionally, we would be remiss in meeting our safety responsibilities if we did not provide sufficient lighting at night on the outside of our school buildings for everyone to travel between buildings and parking lots under the best and safest conditions. While we seek to minimize the amount of exterior lighting during the night hours, lighting is necessary to maintain safety and to discourage those who would wish to vandalize our schools.

With regard to our commitment to energy conservation, the following list of projects and/or programs, installed or initiated, within the last three years in the Cromwell Public School district addresses this topic very well:

- ✓ Three energy conservation evaluations were performed by:
 1. *The Institute for Sustainable Energy (ECSU)*
 2. *Siemen Building Technologies, Inc.*
 3. *Consultant Engineering Services, Inc.*

All evaluations cited Cromwell Public Schools for their noteworthy accomplishments in energy reduction making us “**significantly more efficient than most schools in Connecticut**”.

- ✓ A move to higher efficiency interior lighting upgrades of all schools in conjunction with a CL&P rebate program. (Higher efficiency lights for fewer kilowatts.)
- ✓ Occupancy sensors installed in all classrooms. Lights go off automatically when the rooms are empty.
- ✓ New heat controls added to the building management system at Edna C. Stevens School, Kindergarten and Grade 2 wings for heating that is more even through the rooms.
- ✓ New gas unit heaters installed in Cromwell Middle School gym reducing weekend need to heat entire building when local organizations use the facilities.
- ✓ New central office air handling unit installed reducing spring and fall CMS main boiler operation.
- ✓ Light controls added to building management system at Woodside Intermediate School to shut off selected areas when building is unoccupied.
- ✓ Participation in electricity Load Shed Program using our emergency generators to reduce power use during peak load.
- ✓ Installation of new entry door with vestibules reducing heat loss and increasing energy efficiency.
- ✓ Cromwell Middle School exterior lighting leased from CL&P w/daylight controls.
- ✓ Thermal image camera purchased and used to detect building envelope heat loss or gain.
- ✓ Four maintenance staff trained and received certification in an energy management course provided by Eastern Connecticut State University.
- ✓ Water saving auto flushing devices installed in two schools.
- ✓ Window shades replaced in selected rooms to reduce heat gain at ECS.

In total, these initiatives have significantly reduced our overall energy costs. For example, the shift toward more energy efficient lighting throughout the district is projected to save us almost \$250,000 in energy costs during the next ten years. Measures like these are of a more permanent nature than some of those mentioned in the *Courant* article.

Finally, during the summer of 2010, phase two of our ECS and CMS school improvement upgrades will culminate with the procurement and installation of photovoltaic roofs (solar panels) on both buildings, thereby helping us to produce on-site

a portion of the electrical needs for these buildings. But we are not done yet. We will continue to look for ways to conserve our district's overall energy consumption. We also appreciate your thoughts and questions on the topic.

A 2010-2011 Budget Update. As I write, I have reached agreement in principle with all seven (7) individual contract holders and one (1) union for three unpaid furlough days next year. I am in discussions with the other six (6) unions and hope to be hearing from each of them in the very near future. In light of next year's projected increases in medical benefits and anticipated energy and negotiated salary increases, we will need concessions from all of the remaining unions to help defray these costs if we are to remain within a reasonable educational budget proposal for the 10-11 school year. Additionally, the Board of Education will be hearing budget proposals from each building principal and the Director of Special Services in the weeks ahead, specifically at the January 12th and 26th BOE meetings. I encourage each of you to attend these meetings so that you can hear these presentations first hand, ask questions, or express your views about the proposed 2010-2011 education budget. I look forward to seeing you at these meetings. In the meantime, Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Dr. Matt A. Bisceglia
Superintendent of Schools