

I. BACKGROUND

Project Description

In March 2009, the Wisconsin Green Building Alliance (WGBA) Green Schools Committee decided to conduct a Green Schools Survey. Over the next few months, the survey was drafted and revised, incorporating feedback from the Green Schools Committee members. In July 2009, the Cooperative Educational Services Agency (CESA) Region 10 distributed the survey on behalf of Woody Wiedenhoef, Executive Director for WASBO, to every school district in Wisconsin. The survey was sent to over 700 facilities personnel, business officials, and administrators. In some instances, more than one person from a school district received a survey. There were 52 districts that initially responded to the survey. In November 2009, CESA 10 resent the survey to the same contacts and an additional 41 districts responded, bringing the total response to 93 districts. As an incentive, survey participants were eligible to receive a free registration to the 6th Annual SE2 (Sustainability & Energy Efficiency) Conference.

Purpose

As utility costs increase and budgets are reduced, schools are often faced with having to manage their facilities with fewer resources each year. In an attempt to help schools utilize their limited resources to their fullest potential, the WGBA's Green Schools Committee wanted to gather information from district across the state to help them design and provide green school resources.

Goals

- A. Help the WGBA better understand how to work with school districts in order to achieve their goal of having every child attend a green school within a generation.
- B. Collect information that will help the Focus on Energy Schools and Local Government program carry out their mission.
- C. Collect information that will help the Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program (KEEP) research the development, implementation, and evaluation of effective energy management policies and district-wide energy education plans for K-12 schools in Wisconsin.

Objectives

By the end of administering the Green Schools survey, the WGBA's Green Schools Committee will be able to:

- tailor their general 'Green Schools Presentation' using survey results to better meet the needs of their audiences;
- identify factors that have prevented schools from 'greening' their buildings;
- identify which school districts are interested in learning more about 'greening' their buildings;
- identify which school districts are interested in developing or updating their energy management policy;
- identify which school districts are interested in learning more about KEEP; and
- identify which school districts are interested in learning more about Focus on Energy;

II. DATA ANALYSIS

The results of this survey will be discussed in the following section:

Question 1:

Does your school district have any "green" ENERGY STAR rated or LEED, Green Globes, or CHPS certified buildings?



61 of the 91 districts replied to the survey saying that their district had no “green” buildings, compared to 21 that said there was some kind of “green” building. Nine respondents said they were unsure if their district had such buildings.

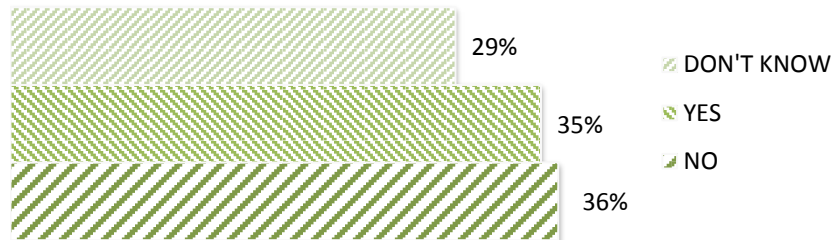
One district’s Director of Buildings and Grounds replied, saying:

“The new High School would have qualified for Silver, but it was not worth \$100,000 to get that specification.”

The Energy Educator/Manager of another district, said that 16 of their 18 buildings are already ENERGY STAR Rated.

Question 2:

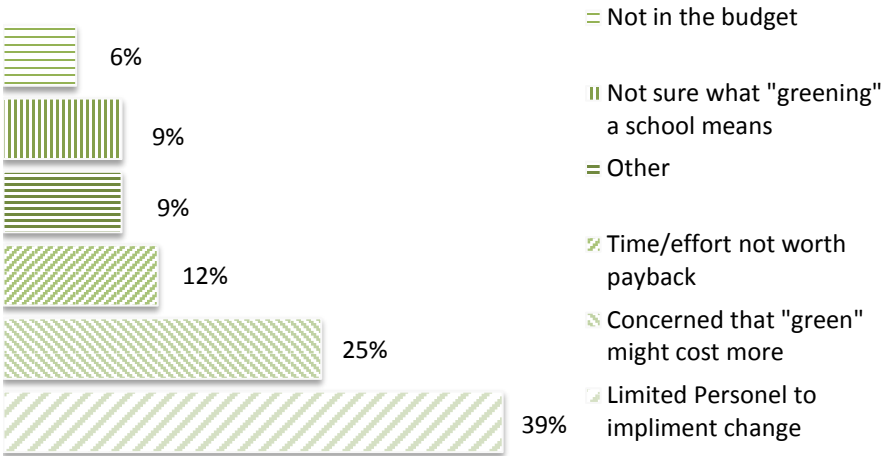
Is your district planning to achieve an ENERGY STAR rating or certify any buildings as LEED, Green Globes, or CHPS in the near future?



This question had the most equally distributed responses, 31 of the 89 responses said their district plans to achieve an ENERGY STAR rating or to certify them as LEED, Green Globes or CHPS schools. 32 respondents said they had no plans for that, and 26 respondents were unsure of the future plans of the district.

Question 3:

Which of the following factors have prevented your district from having new or existing buildings certified?



The biggest deterrent keeping schools from certifying their buildings, according to Question 3 is the limited personnel available for doing so. 55 of the 167 answers claimed this as one of the reasons why the upgrade has not been made. 13 of these responses were cited as “other” and the respondents provided their own reasons for not upgrading their buildings.

The Director of Buildings and Grounds from one school district replied as “other” and said:

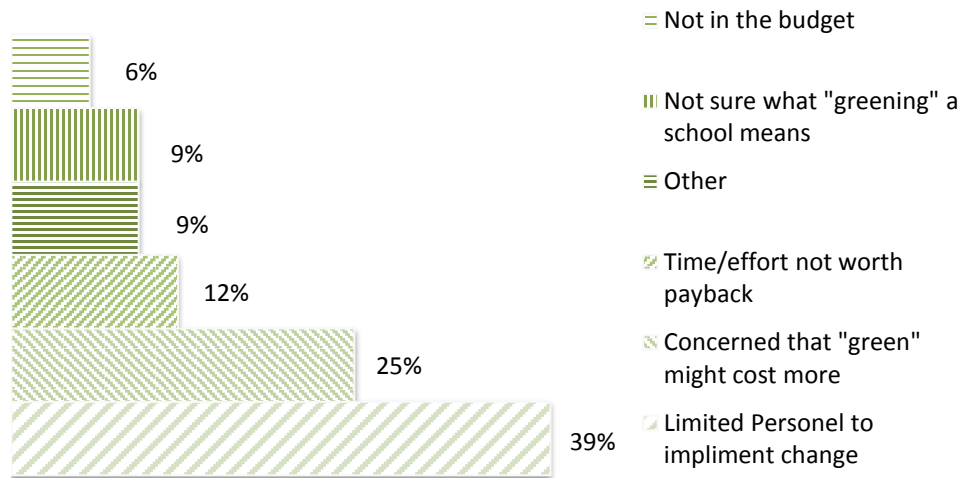
“We have just put together a Energy Committee to look at this.”

The Business Manager for another district replied, saying:

“Four out of five of our schools have ENERGY STAR certification, but one of them continues to be just short of qualifying. We are doing what we can.”

Question 4:

Which of the following factors have prevented your district from becoming more "green?"



Again, limited personnel was the biggest factor in deciding if a district becomes “green” or not; 55 of the 141 responses claimed this as the reason. 25% (35/141 responses) said they thought that upgrading to a “green” district would cost more than keeping things the same.

The Director of Buildings and Grounds at one of the districts said:

“We already recycle, plant trees, use water run-off and have reduced electrical use 1.6 million KW in 9 years.”

Question 5:

Are you aware that sustainable schools may cost less to build and/or operate than traditional construction?



80 of the 90 total responses for this question were yes, showing that the vast majority of district leaders know that it can cost less to build and operate a “green” school than a traditional school.

Question 6:

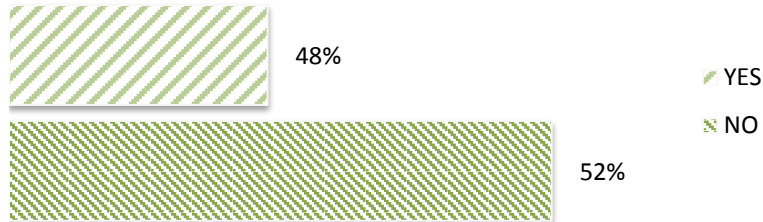
Would your district be interested in learning more about "greening" your schools?



Again, the vast majority of schools who responded said that they would be interested in learning more about how to change their school into a more “green” school. 86 out of the 93 who responded said that they would be interested in this information.

Question 7:

Does your district have an energy management policy in place?



About half of the schools that responded to the survey (52%) said that they did not have an energy management policy in place. 45 of the 93 schools said they already had an energy management plan.

Question 8:

Would your district be interested in updating or creating an effective energy management policy?



72 of the 91 school districts replied saying that they would be interested in updating or creating an effective energy management policy. Of the 45 schools that already have an energy plan in place (from the previous question), 27 of them would be interested in updating the plan that they have.

Question 9:

Would your district be interested in learning how the Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program (KEEP) can help incorporate energy education into your school-wide curriculum?



When responding to Question 9, 83% of the schools (79 of 96 schools) said that they would be willing/interested in learning from KEEP and incorporating energy education in their curriculum. 17 of the 96 said that they would not be interested in working with KEEP for this purpose.

Question 10:

Would your district be interested in learning about the Focus on Energy Schools and Local Government program incentives available to districts in Focus on Energy territories?



80 of the 93 school districts replied to Question 10 saying that they were interested in learning about program incentives from the Focus on Energy Schools program. The other 14% of respondents said that they would not be interested in learning more about this program.

III. ACTION PLAN

Recommendations

1. Improve existing Green School Presentation – making sure the content addresses the concerns that were stated in the survey.
2. Provide both Focus on Energy and KEEP the appropriate list of school districts that expressed interest in learning more about their services.
3. Promote the KEEP School Energy Policy and Education Plan grant program to those districts that expressed interest in developing or updating their energy policies.
4. Collaborate with the WI Green and Healthy Schools Program to coordinate outreach efforts in reaching districts that expressed interest in ‘greening’ their schools.
5. Coordinate an Energy Policy Workshop to assist districts with policy development.
6. Develop a Wisconsin Green School Database to help determine a baseline of green schools.