

Case study

Hardee County School District

Wauchula, Florida



School district's leadership improves learning environment

Part of the Hardee County School District's mission is to provide quality teaching and learning opportunities for its community by working together to achieve common goals. The district achieved that mission through the leadership of the Hardee County School Board and its 10-year relationship with Johnson Controls, Inc., which generated savings of more than \$3.1 million, and allowed for facility upgrades and future planning.

Hardee County School District serves approximately 5,500 students. It comprises six schools that include 30 buildings totaling more than 800,000 square feet. The district was the first in Florida to implement performance contracting under enabling legislation. It is also the first Florida district to complete the 10-year performance contracting cycle with energy savings that exceeded the guarantee every year of the contract.

The success of the collaboration may be best measured by the challenges that needed to be overcome. "We were encountering rising utility bills as a result of out-of-date, inefficient equipment. We needed to find a cost-effective, long-term solution that would improve our classroom environments and simultaneously decrease our operating costs. Performance contracting was the answer," says Rocky Kitchens, assistant superintendent of schools. In addition, humidity and air quality problems caused by the outdated equipment were negatively impacting the learning environment.

Collaboration helps to achieve success

Unsatisfied with the work and results of its air conditioning maintenance provider, the district was looking for a provider who understood its needs and had the ability to cost-efficiently fulfill them. In 1993, the district entered into a performance contract with Johnson Controls. "We selected Johnson Controls over their competitors because they were credible and trustworthy," notes Kitchens.





Hardee School District employees celebrate the completion of the 10-year performance contract with Johnson Controls.

"We selected Johnson Controls over their competitors because they were credible and trustworthy. Johnson Controls is not just a vendor. They were a true partner who supported our programs and our mission."

ROCKY KITCHENS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
OF SCHOOLS
HARDEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Johnson Controls installed a new chiller plant and replaced exterior lighting. High-efficiency mechanical systems with integrated controls were provided. Central air conditioning plants were replaced and extensive mechanical and controls retrofits were conducted at select schools. A Johnson Controls Metasys® building management system was installed to centrally operate systems at three schools.

To best secure potential savings and maintain the new equipment, the district entered into a service agreement with Johnson Controls. The agreement includes preventive maintenance and repair on chilled water air conditioning systems, air handling equipment, pumps, chillers, cooling towers and miscellaneous equipment that requires expert attention.

The Hardee County School District maintenance staff works in conjunction with Johnson Controls to maintain a quality, efficient operation that yields improved learning environments. "After an investment of this magnitude, we wanted the accessibility of system experts," concludes Kitchens. "The service agreement with Johnson Controls allows us to focus on what we do best – educate our children."

Savings turned into curriculum improvements

The program has allowed Hardee County School District to cut energy and operating costs while improving the quality of its maintenance practices and classroom environments.

In the first year of the program, the district saved more than \$127,000 in energy-related costs. Annual

energy consumption was reduced by approximately 2.1 million kilowatt hours, decreasing utility bills by more than 40 percent. Annual operational savings were slated to be a minimum of \$176,000. In the end, combined energy and operational savings over the 10-year contract period totaled more than \$3.1 million against a \$2.8 million guarantee. The savings paid for equipment improvements and yielded funds used to plan for the future.

"Our science departments were the first to reap the financial benefits of the program. We purchased new laboratory equipment and materials for the schools that needed them most," says Dennis Jones, superintendent of schools. "It's when we're able to plan this type of purchase that we realize the true benefits of our relationship with Johnson Controls."

"Because we were able to pay off the contract with a set annual fee, we were able to keep all of our savings, no matter how much they were," notes Kitchens. "Although difficult to quantify, our test scores have improved and I believe the improved teaching and learning environment had a lot to do with it," adds Jones.

Community benefit

The Hardee County School District demonstrated its leadership by making a financially sound decision, one that positively impacts the Hardee County community.

The electrical energy savings, generated by the upgrades made under the performance contract, resulted in 1,751 tons of greenhouse gas emission reductions in just one year. As a result, the Hardee community has become a cleaner, healthier place to live and learn.