

## Savings program the 'right thing to do'

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School, was the site of the program's recent launch.

Representatives of the region's four hydro distributors took part in an interactive session, a workshop and a school tour.

Alexander's is one of the new generation of schools, with savings expected to be borne out of updated automated environmental control systems for things like heating and air conditioning, and through the use of more energy-efficient lighting.

However, the attitude of consumers, as much as the new products themselves, can have a positive impact on energy usage, said the Halton board's Facilities Superintendent Gerry Cullen, noting he's emphasizing the program's potential to change the attitude of school staff and students over any anticipated cost savings.

"It's not really a dollars and cents issue as much as the right thing to do. We don't have a lot of big industrial (electrical) stuff. For us it's lighting," Cullen said of the board's biggest source of electricity consumption.

Ballentine said lighting accounts for about 15 per cent of electrical costs in a typical home but about 45 per cent in schools and board administrative offices.

Lights and computer hardware are the prime culprits, items that students and staff can exercise some control over, he said.

"It's computer monitors and peripherals, like printers, but mostly the monitor — it uses more energy than any other part of the computer."

Heating and air-conditioning are centrally controlled and the responsibility of the school/building custodian and may not end up as part of an energy action plan.

Each school will assemble an Eco Team. Comprised of an administrator — likely a principal — a teacher, custodian and several students, Ballentine said it will be akin to an environmental club.

"We're changing the way of thinking about energy use. The caretaker team would walk around the school and note things that could be turned off. They would submit a report and then an action plan.

"Perhaps most importantly, by reducing electricity consumption, school staff will be responding to the urgent need to reduce the health-damaging and costly effects of (coal-fired) electricity generation which Peter Love, chief energy conservation officer, Conservation Bureau — Division of Ontario Power Authority, has identified is responsible for the majority of the greenhouse gas emissions that are largely responsible for climate change," said Ballentine.

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