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News Release

Stoughton Utilities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School District Receives Funding for Tunable LED Lighting Project

Stoughton Area School District (SASD) recently received grant funding from Stoughton Utilities and the American Public Power Association (APPA) to complete a tunable light emitting diode (LED) lighting project. The project will involve the installation of tunable LED lights, which can give off different colors and intensities of light; teacher training and feedback; and a video about the process. The project will provide energy savings and help district officials explore the effects of tunable LED lighting on sleep patterns, concentration, mood, and student behavior in the classroom.

Stoughton Utilities provided \$10,000 with the help of Commitment to Community funding from the utility's energy provider WPPI Energy. APPA provided an additional \$10,000 through the Demonstration of Energy & Efficiency Developments (DEED) program. SASD and Stoughton Utilities are working with the Midwest Lighting Institute, a local, not-for-profit research organization, to analyze the installed lighting and its effects on the learning environment.

“We spend a lot of time indoors compared to 50-100 years ago,” said Cory Neeley, WPPI Energy Services Representative for Stoughton Utilities. “Evidence suggests humans need exposure to sunlight in order to perform as expected and sleep as needed.”

Tunable LED lights can mimic natural sunlight, which could help regulate sleep-wake cycles, decrease the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder, and improve concentration. Tunable LED lights can also be set to colors with higher wavelengths, such as yellow or red, to produce a calming effect that could potentially decrease behavioral issues in the classroom.

Installation of tunable lighting started December 23, 2016 while students were on winter break. The district partnered with Stoughton Utilities to install tunable LED lighting in three classrooms at Fox Prairie Elementary School and two classrooms at Stoughton High School. Teachers received training on how to change color temperature and intensity to create adaptable learning environments, and will send feedback to district administrators via a monthly survey. Stoughton Utilities will produce a video that will show the classrooms before and after, highlight energy savings and the partnership between the utility and school district, and feature interviews with teachers and students who participate in the project.

“We are excited to pilot cutting-edge tunable lighting in several of our classrooms,” said district administrator Tim Onsager. “This is the kind of innovation in thought, practice, and partnerships that we value as a district, and we are grateful that Stoughton Utilities and WPPI Energy share our commitment.”

The new tunable LED light fixtures are expected to yield an energy cost savings of at least 50% compared to traditional fluorescent lamps.

“Energy efficiency has been a priority of our school district, and Stoughton Utilities and WPPI Energy have been great partners in this effort,” said Calvin Merath, Buildings and Grounds Supervisor for SASD. “Our district has been pleased to work with both organizations to foster an environment where our facilities are conducive to student learning.”

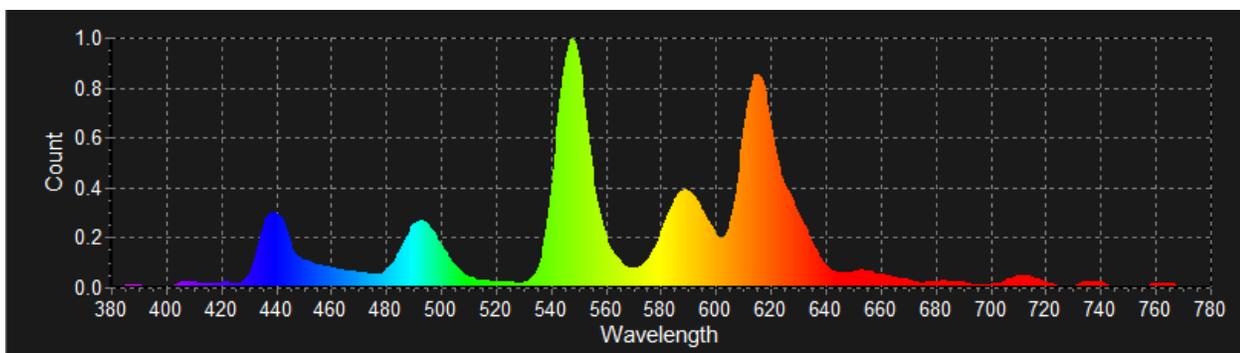


Photo 1: Spectrum profile of a classroom with standard fluorescent lighting in Fox Prairie

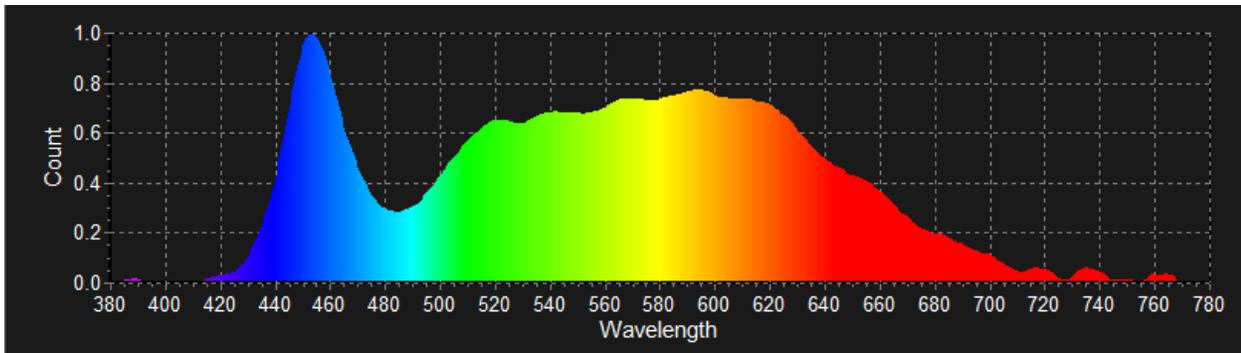


Photo 2: Spectrum profile of a classroom retrofitted with tunable lighting

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About Stoughton Utilities

Stoughton Utilities is the city's locally owned, not-for-profit electric, water and wastewater utility. Utility staff strive to provide their 8,500+ customers with low-cost, reliable electric service; clean, high-quality water that meets or exceeds all state and federal standards; and state-of-the-art wastewater treatment services. The utility is directed by a utility committee comprised of local residents, and citizens always have the opportunity to have a voice in utility decisions and programs. Stoughton Utilities is a member of joint action agency and energy provider WPPI Energy.

About the American Public Power Association

APPA is the national organization serving the interests of the nation's more than 2,000 community- and state-owned electric utilities. The association established the DEED program in 1980 to sponsor and conduct activities related to energy innovation that improve efficiency or lower costs in providing energy services to consumers of publicly owned electric utilities. DEED funds are used to support innovative utility programs. Stoughton Utilities is a member of APPA.