

Section 12.1 Policy and Program Recommendations

1. The State should provide \$30,000 in annual funding to KACEE to support energy conservation education in Kansas public schools (K-12).

Because educating school children is an essential component of a statewide educational campaign to promote energy conservation, the State should provide funds to establish an ongoing K-12 energy conservation education program.

This program should be implemented by the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE), a private, non-profit association that has an established statewide network that includes partnerships with the Kansas State Board of Education and Department of Education, the Kansas Association of Teachers of Science, numerous schools and school districts throughout the state, as well as supporting public and private entities that work to promote and provide environmental education throughout the state. These established partnerships uniquely position KACEE to work with audiences that will generate the most impact for the educational outreach effort.¹

KACEE already has acquired curriculum materials targeting energy conservation—a program called Project Learning Tree Energy and Society. Project Learning Tree's Energy and Society program was developed nationally to provide teachers with non-biased and science-based hands-on activities that promote critical thinking and problem-solving related to energy and energy issues. This is a supplemental program that can be used to help teachers attain state standards in reading, writing, math, science and social studies, while engaging students in exploring energy, energy use, natural resources and energy conservation. The materials have been evaluated by the North American Association for Environmental Education's Guidelines for Excellence and have been found to be high-quality energy conservation education materials.

In addition, KACEE is currently working with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Bureau of Air and Radiation to implement a Green Schools program, which includes energy audits and on-site conservation and service learning projects. Because of the strong statewide partnerships KACEE has established, they can use this and other related initiatives in combination with the proposed K-12 energy conservation education program to offer a comprehensive and exciting program for students throughout the state.

KACEE would provide training to teachers and other educators through workshops that would allow them to simultaneously meet recertification requirements, while exploring the energy and energy conservation curriculum KACEE staff estimates that they could provide energy conservation training for about 200 educators in geographically diverse regions of the state for approximately \$30,000 a year. These teachers would reach an estimated 6,000 school children in the first year, with the

¹ More information about KACEE is available on their web site: <http://www.kacee.org>.

numbers nearly doubling in the second year, tripling in the third, etc., as trained teachers go on to teach each year's students. KACEE is also in the process of exploring opportunities to offer these courses to teachers in an online setting, which would allow even greater access to the energy conservation education program and materials, thus potentially significantly increasing impact.

Recommended Actions

a. Responsible parties

KACEE.

b. Legislative action

Appropriate \$30,000 in annual funding to KACEE, as described above

c. Budget requirements

\$30,000 annually.

d. Implementation timeline

Funding would be made available upon effective date of enabling legislation.

Implications of Proposal

a. Pros

- i. Improves understanding of energy resources and conservation among Kansas school children and teachers.
- ii. Likely to increase awareness of energy resources and related issues among parents of children receiving this education.
- iii. Promotes conservation of energy resources statewide.
- iv. Promotes reduction of energy consumption statewide.

b. Cons

- i. Requires \$30,000 in annual state funds.