

STUDENTS TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR FUTURE WITH SMART METERING

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Back in 2011, Queen Elizabeth High School became the first school in Canada to install solar panels. The installation was part of a hands-on project called “Innovate” to teach students about energy. Students then began to explore ways of enhancing their use of solar energy.

“Instead of time consuming and costly measures to install more panels, we looked at ways of reducing energy consumption,” said Aaron Dublenko, Innovate coordinator for Queen Elizabeth and Argyll schools. “We turned to smart metering. That way we could monitor electrical use in real time, the carbon emissions equivalent, and the cost to taxpayers to operate a building.” The students use an improved smart technology called Circuit Meters, invented by Dan Seto, an entrepreneur in Toronto. They then drafted projects and found City of Edmonton staff to work with. “The students presented to facilities managers, who were immediately on board. They became our community partners.”

The students have presented at many conferences, including those attended by educators, facilities managers, businesses, and decision-makers interested in climate change. They demonstrated that a school can save three to five per cent on energy consumption with these smart meters – thousands of dollars annually.

This year, more students will install this technology in their schools and begin to do energy audits in response to the new carbon levy.

“This levy promotes innovative ways of learning about climate change through energy use, policy and renewable energies,” said Dublenko. “Innovate students are encouraged to become agents of change and take charge of their energy futures. The goal with these projects is to help raise generations of energy-literate Albertan citizens and connect them to career pathways in sustainable development.”