

The Duncan Banner

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DPS cutting costs

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— Saving money isn't just a personal finance issue anymore. An increasing number of businesses are looking to cut costs, and Duncan Public Schools is no exception.

On Sept. 9, the Board of Education approved the \$22,994 purchase of three energy controllers — a technology that promises to reduce electric bills and pay for itself in savings in a few years.

The mechanism, KAVAR Energy Controllers, attaches to existing electrical units and helps the unit use more of the electricity going into it by reducing the unit's inductive load.

"At the beginning there's an initial investment," Superintendent Sherry Labyer said. "But the return on the investment is less than two years."

The high school auditorium, science building and main building will each receive one of the controllers.

The effectiveness of the product will be evaluated during the next six to eight months by comparing utility bills and electric usage from previous years. If the program is successful, other district buildings might have the controllers added.

With a life expectancy of 25 years and with no significant loss in efficiency, the controllers are a long-term investment aimed at saving long-term dollars.

"All we've seen the last two to three years is an increase in utilities," Labyer said. "I don't see the cost going down."

The board originally heard about the product during a presentation at its Aug. 12 meeting. The energy controllers, which are available for residential homes as well as larger buildings, reclaim and reuse electricity that is being paid for, but not necessarily used.

Labyer told the Board Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) monies could be used to pay for the controllers.

A QZAB is bond money schools can use for renovations and repairs, investing in equipment and up-to-date technology and training teachers, among other uses. It cannot be used for new construction.

The interest on the bonds is paid for by the federal government, allowing schools to save money while making needed improvements to facilities.

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