District Launches Energy-Use Dashboard
District Energy Saving Competition Underway

As part of its continuing sustainability efforts, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District has launched the SMMUSD Energy Use Dashboard, an interactive tool that students, staff, parents and community members can use to monitor the district's energy use by school and district sites.

What can one find out by viewing? Well, in addition to by-school-and-district-site comparisons of energy use, and savings over time, users could learn that:

- District energy use has been flat for three years, increasing annually by only about 0.1 percent.
- Overall, the district is producing 105 percent of its solar-energy production goal.
- Eight of the nine schools with solar power meet or exceed their solar production goal.
- The district office uses twice more energy monthly than the highest-consuming school (Santa Monica High School). The two biggest reasons: The 16th Street building houses the data center supporting all 16 school sites and several other facilities. The data center temperature must be maintained at a low temperature at all times.

Caroline Coster, the district's sustainability coordinator, said it is difficult to persuade people to change energy-use behaviors unless they can see data. "Transparency with our energy use can translate into community buy-in for behavior-driven savings, both inside the district and at students' homes and parents' businesses," she said.

Internally, the district is promoting energy awareness and the launch of the dashboard by holding a districtwide energy-savings competition. All schools and administrative sites are competing to save the most energy between Oct. 1 and Nov. 30. The winning location will earn recognition by the Board of Education and other prizes.

Among the steps, students and employees are being encouraged to take, that Coster says can help at home, too:

- Ensuring computers, smart boards and projectors are shut off when not in use (sleep mode still uses energy)
- Turning off lights, fans, coffee makers, and other devices when not in use and at the end of the day
- Closing blinds and windows and setting thermostat to "off" when possible to save on cooling costs

"If we can encourage enough behavior change among students and staff, I think we'll be surprised at and proud of how much we can save," Coster said.

\#   \#   \#

Written by: Chris Clonts, Communications Specialist