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### **Energy Upgrades Cut Costs for Northern California Schools**

*Schools implement energy efficient upgrades with SmartWatt to cut costs, enhance learning environments and decrease their carbon footprint.*

**LIVE OAK, Calif. (April 2019)** — SmartWatt hosted an event Thursday to recognize 23 school districts in Northern California that initiated energy efficient upgrades in the last several years with funds from Proposition 39. The event included school superintendents, facilities directors, SmartWatt representatives, PG&E representatives and California Energy Commission representatives. A panel was assembled to answer questions about energy efficient upgrades and how schools can continue to implement energy savings projects and pay for them through the savings generated.

First approved in 2000, Proposition 39 provides grant funding for schools to receive energy efficient upgrades in the state of California. The process of applying for the grant and navigating the energy services can be cumbersome, so SmartWatt, an energy optimization service company, worked with 23 districts in Sutter, Yuba and Lassen Counties to help enact greener initiatives in lighting, HVAC, solar power and more.

More than 70 schools in the area were upgraded with various services, and are projected to collectively save the districts over \$1 million annually as a result. Overall, the districts are conserving approximately 145,000 lbs of CO2 and effectively decreasing their carbon footprint with these new updates.

“We want to congratulate these school district leaders for taking the first steps in optimizing their school buildings,” said Danny Birkholz, Account Executive at SmartWatt. “The schools are not only saving money from the energy upgrades, but also providing a better learning environment for their students.”

Children spend about 1,000 waking hours per year at their schools. Research has shown that students in full-spectrum lit classrooms did better academically than students who had poorly lit classrooms. Lighting can affect a person’s sleep, mood, focus, motivation, concentration and work. These are all important pillars in creating a successful academic environment for children.

In addition to an enhanced learning environment, upgrading energy systems will also boost student and staff productivity, increase sustainability and cut costs. School districts in the U.S. spend \$6 billion each year on energy — second only to salaries. These savings can be reinvested into the classrooms and used to benefit the students.

Jason Waddell, the Superintendent overseeing three schools in the Susanville Elementary School District, is pleased with the results of SmartWatt’s upgrades. In just one of his school’s

gyms, an old light that was replaced was using the same amount of energy as 24 of the new lights that SmartWatt installed. The lighting throughout the school is much brighter, more inviting and has made a world of difference, according to Waddell.

“Having developed the relationship with SmartWatt through the Prop 39 program, we’ve developed a lifelong partner that is knowledgeable and easy to work with,” Waddell said. “They are a great resource that we will continue to use in the long run, not just for things that are grant funded, but for other energy conservation ventures in the future.”

Funds granted through Proposition 39 are beginning to dissipate, but energy optimization services don’t have to come to an end. The opportunity to start implementing energy-saving upgrades means schools can stop spending dollars on high energy bills and invest those savings into other programming within the school.

“Delaying energy-saving upgrades means schools are continuing to pay utility companies for wasted energy,” Birkholz said. “With or without grant funding, optimizing energy consumption is important for schools, and SmartWatt is available to help schools figure out how they can financially and tangibly achieve these sustainability goals.”

For more information about SmartWatt and the services they offer, please visit [www.SmartWatt.com](http://www.SmartWatt.com).

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### **About SmartWatt**

Since it was launched at Albany, N.Y, in 2002, SmartWatt has been honored for its innovative energy-systems optimization work with city and county governments, colleges and universities and businesses throughout the United States. SmartWatt has been recognized by the Department of Energy as one of the top energy service companies in the U.S.