

Minnesota is partner in DOE's Zero Energy Schools Accelerator program

Minnesota and California along with six school districts and several national organizations are implementing partners in the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) new Zero Energy Schools Accelerator program, the DOE announced on Dec. 6. The Accelerator is part of the DOE's Better Buildings Initiative and its ongoing strategy to advance energy efficiency and accelerate the market adoption of Zero Energy Buildings.

"K-12 schools have good replication potential and can lead the way to market transformation of zero energy construction," according to the DOE. "The Zero Energy Schools Accelerator aims to reduce the energy consumption of schools, while enhancing the educational environment for our nation's students and making Zero Energy Buildings mainstream."

A Zero Energy Building is an energy-efficient building, where, on a source energy basis, the actual delivery of energy is less than or equal to the onsite renewable exported energy.

On average, Zero Energy Schools can use 65% to 80% less energy than conventionally constructed schools, while the remaining energy required is supplied by renewable energy. This significantly reduces utility costs, often amounting to more than \$100,000 per year. To help schools realize these savings, DOE and its supporting organizations will work with the implementing partners and help them develop a road map for Zero Energy Schools.

The Accelerator goals include:

- Identify strategies to overcome market barriers related to building Zero Energy Schools;
- Share solutions, resources, and technologies that help schools achieve zero energy goals;
- Develop replicable road maps to build Zero Energy Schools; and
- Increase visibility and replication of best practice approaches and successful models.

Commerce leads Minnesota's Accelerator effort

The Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources will be Minnesota's collaborating partner on the Accelerator effort. It will identify one or more K-12 school projects appropriate for pursuing zero energy goals and will prepare a road map to outline key zero energy design parameters and address barriers to achieving zero energy.

[Lindsay Wimmer](#), Energy Project Manager for the Division of Energy Resources, is the Commerce contact person for the Accelerator program. Commerce recently became a member of the [Minnesota Green Schools Coalition](#), a network of the state's strongest advocates leading the charge for healthy learning environments for our children while inspiring environmental stewardship in students of all ages.

[Read more](#) to learn about the Zero Energy Schools Accelerator.