



# SERT Spotlight

DECEMBER 2017



**DECEMBER** is filled with celebrations, holidays, and special awareness days. Lights are often used to decorate the inside and outside of our homes, schools, and stores and they're often breathtakingly beautiful! But these stunning displays can use quite a bit of energy.

A Department of Energy report estimated that holiday lights account for 2.22 terawatt-hours (TWh), or approximately the amount of energy consumed by 200,000 homes over 12 months. One TWh is equivalent to 1,000,000,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh), which is the standard measurement used in [SERT's data charts](#) that track electricity consumed by our schools. One way to reduce energy use is to switch to LED bulbs which consume a fraction of the amount of energy used by traditional incandescent bulbs. LED light strands are quickly growing in popularity because they are:

- **ENERGY EFFICIENT.** Using LED strands to light a 6-foot tree for 12 hours a day for 40 days will cost about \$.82 vs. \$10 for traditional lights.
- **SAFER.** LEDs are much cooler than incandescent lights, reducing the risk of combustion or burnt fingers. Also, up to 25 strings of LEDs can be connected end-to-end without overloading a wall socket.
- **MORE DURABLE.** LEDs are made with epoxy lenses, not glass, and are much more resistant to breakage. The LED strands you buy in 2017 could still be in use 40 holiday seasons from now!

So, whether you're decorating for a special event or for the entire holiday season, "go green" and make the switch to LED. 🌱

## IN THIS ISSUE:

### 'TIS THE SEASON TO SHUT THINGS DOWN!

Each time we approach a long weekend or break, SERT sends you a shutdown reminder email. Find out why shutdowns are so important.

### ENERGY-EFFICIENT LIGHTING

Will switching from traditional incandescent lights to LED ones greatly reduce your electricity bill? Yes, it will!

### RECYCLING RESULTS

When you make efforts to raise awareness about recycling, you will definitely get better results. Let's continue to close the gap.

### TERRIFIC TEAMS

Great things are rarely accomplished by just one person—they're done by a team. Check out what's happening with our awesome school-based SERT team at [Meadow Hall ES](#).

## ENJOY WINTER BREAK!



# Saving Energy With Shutdown Checklists

**HAVE YOU EVER PACKED** for a vacation only to arrive at your destination to find that you're missing something crucial, like your toothbrush? Using a checklist while packing is the best way to ensure that you don't forget to put anything in your suitcase. In like manner, the best way to make sure that you've remembered to turn off or unplug electrical devices at your school prior to a long weekend or break is to use a SERT Shutdown Checklist. Remember not to unplug your computers or turn off your surge protectors because MCPS may be updating your computers while school is not in session.

We ask you to perform the shutdown process primarily because leaving overhead lighting and other electrical devices on for an extended period of time is a terrible waste of money and natural resources. Leaving these items running may also damage equipment prematurely.

As you make your way from room to room, check to see that windows are closed, shades/blinds are drawn, and unnecessary equipment is turned off. This is also the perfect time to make sure water fixtures aren't leaking and toilets aren't running constantly.

## Why are there different checklists?

While the [weekend/long weekend](#) shutdown checklist is the same year around, the [summer](#), [winter](#), and [spring](#) break shutdown forms are specific to the season. These seasonal forms take into consideration the temperatures outside and the potential for the building to be occupied.

## Does your schools have relocatable classrooms?

Did you know the relocatable classrooms consume more energy to heat or cool the space? Please be sure that temperatures are set at the recommended set points (70°F in winter and 76°F in summer). Any deviation from the recommended set points must be reported to the building service manager. Complete the checklist for each of your relocatable classrooms.

## Why do we ask you to submit forms via email?

There are three main benefits to sending your SERT Shutdown Checklist to us electronically:

**REDUCED TIME.** The amount of time associated with sending a single fax can be up to 10 minutes. You key in the number, scan the document, then wait patiently for the confirmation page. On the other end, someone has to walk over to their fax machine, retrieve the document, then process it. When



you multiply that action by our 205 schools, you can see how much time is spent sending/receiving with the form.

**REDUCED PAPER.** When you fax your form to SERT, we scan the faxed page, file it electronically, then throw the faxed document away. If every school emailed their form instead of faxing it, we could save up to a ream of paper for each shut down session!

**REDUCED ENERGY.** It's true that fax machines aren't huge energy hogs compared to overhead lights and HVAC systems, but they do consume more electricity than email does.

If you have any questions about the SERT shutdown forms or the process, contact us by phone at 240-314-4709 or email us at [SERT@mcpsmd.org](mailto:SERT@mcpsmd.org).

# CLOSING the GAP

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS FOR

## a·ware·ness

/ə'werenəs/ 

*noun*

**knowledge or perception of a situation or fact**

“we need to raise public awareness of the issue”

*synonyms:* **consciousness, recognition, realization, understanding, grasp, appreciation, knowledge, insight, familiarity**



**RECYCLING** is a vital sustainable practice because it saves natural resources and energy by reducing the need to use raw materials for making new products. It's also a wonderful educational opportunity because it engages students in conscientious behavior that they can continue outside of the classroom.

In our [November issue](#), we discussed infrastructure and how having properly labeled recycling bins and lids in place throughout your school will help increase your recycling rates. Now that you've had time to order supplies [via Maximo](#), we can move on to the next important factor: **AWARENESS**.


While many of us recycle because it is the right thing to do to protect the environment, we need to remember that it is also [MCPS policy](#) to recycle, and it's a [Montgomery County regulation](#). We need to make sure that all of our students and staff know what we can and cannot recycle in our schools. Share or post our [Recycling 101](#) flyer.

A great way to raise awareness is to display [posters](#) from SERT's WATTS UP? contest throughout your school and to encourage your K-12 students and staff to participate in the [2018 contest](#). Some school-based SERT teams create their own school-specific signs and post them to help raise awareness about the importance of recycling.

Recycling information and training might be shared during a schoolwide [assembly](#) or classroom presentation. Add some [fun facts](#) about recycling to your morning announcements, school newspaper or your school's social media. TV production classes or clubs can create videos or find some appropriate ones on YouTube. Find interesting ways to catch people's attention while reminding them to recycle.



Get your students excited about recycling by including them in your awareness campaigns the way Mr. Matt Niper did as vice principal at Northwest High School. Click the image above to see their short video.

Find ways to promote your recycling program, and then celebrate your success. Keep track of your results by checking your [recycling data](#) on a consistent basis. And as always, SERT program staff is available to help you. 

# Today's Students, Tomorrow's Leaders

*By Luis A. San Sebastian, Assistant Principal, Meadow Hall Elementary School*

The staff and students at **MEADOW HALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** take recycling and energy conservation pretty seriously. So, it's no surprise that Meadow Hall has been consistently recognized for their efforts to decrease energy consumption while increasing their recycling participation.

While SERT program staff has been instrumental in helping create a culture of collaboration and awareness, it has been the day-to-day efforts of students and staff that have made the biggest impact on our school's success. Whether it is a teacher selecting a student energy ambassador or a grade level team working with building service staff to delamp areas in the hallways and classrooms to decrease our energy usage, the culture of collaboration can be seen throughout the building.

One particular project that has been extremely successful is our "Meadow Hall Buddies" recycling program. This program brings students together from our general education and autism classes to collect recycling bins throughout the building on a weekly basis. The program, supervised by one of our autism program teachers and supported by our building service manager, has been very successful on many fronts. The amount of recycled materials has increased, the schoolwide impact on students seeing their recycled materials being collected has made a powerful impact, and most importantly, the



strong relationships between our students and the overall sense of accomplishment has been invaluable to everyone involved in the program.



This newsletter is produced by the School Energy and Recycling Team (SERT) program and distributed to SERT leaders, school-based SERT teams, building service personnel, and others who are interested in conservation and sustainability. As part of the [Montgomery County Public Schools](#) Department of Facilities Management, the SERT program provides opportunities for all schools to participate and receive incentives and recognition for their energy conservation and recycling efforts. We support a balanced environment for the integration of all students to work together in a culturally diverse environment, and strive to provide the resources, support, and vision of the future for a successful conservation program at each school. Promoting the connections between human behavior and its impact on the environment reinforces our culture of conservation and increases participation in our mission to conserve resources and recycle actively.



## SERT PROGRAM

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