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2018 Year in Review: Issues and Solutions for Ohio Schools

Ohio-based Plug Smart, one of the state's leading energy services firms, worked closely with Ohio school districts in 2018 to offer unique solutions to the most pressing needs related to challenges with air conditioning, safety and security and operational expenses.

Air Conditioning: In the summer and fall of 2018, parts of Ohio experienced some of hottest temperatures on record. Many school districts with buildings in need of HVAC systems repair or replacement struggled to keep schools properly cooled, causing costly shutdowns.

Plug Smart partnered with over 20 Ohio school districts with aging HVAC systems to either add or renovate air conditioning systems in a fast, cost-effective manner. Plug Smart does this by leveraging several unique grant funds and contracting mechanisms to allow competitively bid services on an accelerated timeline, taking the administrative hassle and delays out of re-bidding this mission-critical initiative.

Safety and Security: In the 2017-2018 school year, the U.S. witnessed a 62 percent increase in threats of school violence over the previous school year. This caused many school administrators across the country to take a closer look at ways to improve safety and security measures. Plug Smart recognized that many budget-restricted Ohio schools were still operating on manual systems in 2018 – systems that did not allow for administrators to track who was entering their buildings and when, or have the capacity to lock down or open schools remotely if necessary.

Not only did Plug Smart work with Ohio school districts to obtain significant grant funding for preventative, low-voltage safety and security technologies, but it also implemented these systems using schools' known and trusted technology partners. By offering access control, intrusion detection, video surveillance and other integrated security solutions, Plug Smart was able to give Ohio school administrators the tools to streamline safety and security systems that will continue to operate smoothly and efficiently in this quickly evolving landscape.

Operational Expenses: Many Ohio school districts continued to operate under constrained budgets for energy-related services during the 2017-2018 school year. Administrators aren't always aware of federal or state funding opportunities available to school districts for energy projects, and the administrative process of applying for this funding is often arduous and complex.

In 2018, Plug Smart was the top vendor in delivering the State's Energy Efficiency grants for the third consecutive year, and just received an allocation of at least \$500,000 more funds for 2019. This exclusive funding source allows schools to implement much needed energy system repairs, installations or safety and security measures. Plug Smart worked with schools to conduct financial analyses to determine the right funding strategy to both minimize capital outlay and ensure that budget limitations are considered. The company designs programs for Ohio school districts that minimize initial investment and maximize value through project savings and grant funding.

Plug Smart plans to utilize the lessons learned from its successful partnerships with Ohio school districts in 2018 to continue to bring creative solutions to its clients in 2019.

About Plug Smart

Plug Smart is a full-service, Ohio-based energy services company with offices in Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Cleveland and Ft. Myers, Florida. Plug Smart offers turnkey and individual project services for school districts, commercial/industrial clients, government facilities and hospitals.

