extra credit

GO GREEN TO SAVE GREEN

Turns out Kermit was wrong. It is easy being green. Green schools are easier on natural resources, on student health, and on the taxpayer’s pocketbook. If all new school construction and school renovations went green starting today, energy savings alone would total $20 billion over the next 10 years.

Natural ventilation and light can help schools use about 40 percent less energy than typical schools.

A study of more than 21,000 students showed that in classrooms filled with natural daylight they progressed 20 percent faster in math and 26 percent faster in reading.

Low-flow sinks, waterless urinals, and dual-flush toilets reduce total water use by as much as 50 percent. Toilets that use harvested rainwater instead of potable water help ease the strain on municipal water systems.

By using renewable energy sources like Solar-powered lights with remote sensors, green schools can reduce harmful carbon dioxide emissions by 40 percent.

Recycling programs that involve students directly teach responsible environmental habits while diverting waste from landfills. Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for three hours—or the equivalent of a half a gallon of gasoline.

Custodians who use green cleaners reduce toxic emissions and improve indoor air quality. Improved indoor air quality reduces asthma in schools by an average of 38.5 percent.

Schools report a 3 to 16 percent increase in school meal participation when farm-fresh food is served, from either the school garden or local farms.

NEA’s headquarters facility is also going green. The building obtained Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. Learn more at nea.org/nealeed.