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Vineland schools save money while also conserving energy

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VINELAND — Vineland Public Schools may be best known for its crimson colors, but the district was recently noticed for going green.

The district received the Trane Energy Efficiency

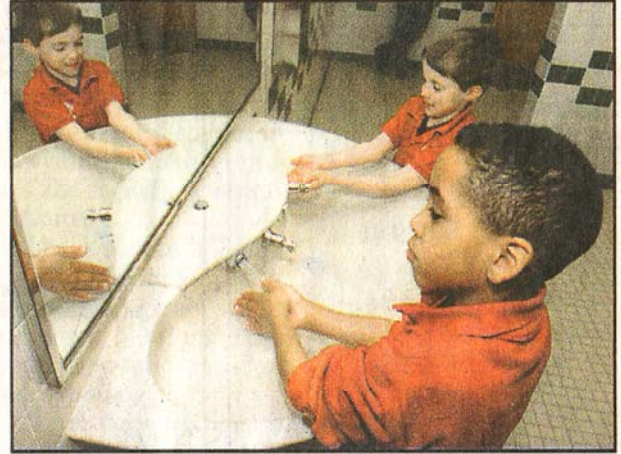
Leader in Education Award Tuesday for its approach toward sustainable energy and operational efficiency. The effort saves about \$2 per square foot of each building, said Wayne Weaver, district executive director of physical facilities.

“The theory is always higher efficiency and higher energy certainly better

the learning environment for students and staff,” said Weaver, who accepted the award.

The buildings that won Vineland the award are Pauline J. Petway Elementary School, Thomas W. Wallace Jr. Intermediate School, Veterans Memorial Intermediate School and

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Staff photo/Charles J. Olson

James Johnson, 6 (front), and Kyle Garrett, 7, students at Petway Elementary School in Vineland, wash their hands in the school's new automatic energy-saving restroom sinks.

Energy

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the Vineland Community Learning Complex, home of Gloria M. Sabater Elementary School.

A gas-fired unit replaced a larger, older oil-fired unit during renovations at Veterans Memorial last year. The three newer schools have geothermal systems to heat and cool the building, automatic sinks and toilets, and several windows for natural light, Weaver said.

“We went with that full-blown green system, which is really sustainable through the duration of the building,” Weaver said.

The geothermal system was

an expensive addition, but director of the New Jersey Sierra Club Jeff Tittel said most energy efficiencies pay for themselves within five years.

“Green equals green,” he said.

If \$2 is saved per square foot, then Petway saves the district \$152,000 with its structure and the Learning Complex saves \$270,000.

Sabater vice principal Debbie Bechtel can appreciate the district's savings in money and energy, but believes there's a benefit for the school children, too.

“I think it's great because we're teaching our kids to be environmentally conscious,” she said.