Key messages:

* Incentive funding provides valuable funds for the operation of an energy conservation program
* A program tailored to the needs of school boards allows significant savings of public money
* The application process needs to be streamlined, flexible in how requirements are met, clear from the beginning, consistent and predictable, with minimal requirements
* An application process that accommodates energy conservation projects that form a part of a much larger construction process without requiring the creation of additional evidence would be valuable for school boards
* An multi-site application would be advantageous to reduce the amount of paperwork required
* Programs need to be easy to navigate, consistent year-to-year, and predictable. The current proposal seems like it will result in many fragmented small program options
* A focus on reducing total consumption, not just demand savings, needs to be incorporated into program, so that school boards that already have reduced consumption in the summer can still benefit
* A prescriptive program for common actions like LED lighting, VFDs, high efficiency HVAC, etc that has minimal documentation requirements is important
* A flexible general program for all other projects that accepts engineering calculations as savings estimates and then requires monitoring is also attractive
* Simple is better

Incentive funding is an important part of the Waterloo Region District School Board’s energy conservation program. It provides an important source of additional funding that allows the Facility Services team to take on a larger scope of work, and reduce our energy consumption more quickly.

A well-funded and generous incentive program with a streamlined application process allows school boards to invest in energy conservation producing significant savings of public money.

The current prescriptive portion of the Retrofit program is effective at helping school boards make investments in energy conservation measures that are obvious like upgrading to LED lighting. Keeping this kind of prescriptive measure would be advantageous, especially if the review process of the application was slightly less strict around proving timelines, and the information required on quotes.

School boards run large projects that can often incorporate energy conservation components with a large number of other considerations (eg an interior renovation that upgrades lighting). However the tendering process tends not to produce the kinds of quotes specific to the incentive program that is currently required. If the application process could be amended to make it easier to apply for incentives on large projects that include small energy conservation components, this would significantly increase my Board’s capacity to undertake energy conservation programming and to work with the incentive program, while minimizing staff time spent on administering projects and the incentive program.

In general, keeping the application process as streamlined as possible, and as consistent as possible, would be valuable. The current Retrofit program does not list clearly enough in any one document the requirements at each stage of the process, making it difficult to plan for and use.

A program tailored to Broader Public Sector organizations where relationships can be developed and a whole-portfolio approach to applications could be taken would be advantageous. Being able to submit an application for multiple different sites with the same measure would streamline the process significantly, rather than having to deal with dozens of small applications.

The current proposal puts a high emphasis on peak demand savings. Conservation in general needs to also be valued, especially in the Education sector where significant cost to the public can be avoided, but demand is already lower in the summer.

The current proposal is not very specific, and looks like it is highly flexible. The concern is that the resulting programming will be convoluted and difficult to navigate, making it less valuable. Clear rules for how to access money that are consistent and don’t change year-to-year allow a more impactful and cost-effective energy conservation program to be built.