

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## School Energy Audit Reports

1. What is plug-load?

Answer: Plug-load is anything that is powered by an electrical outlet in a room. This could be a microwave, refrigerator, space heater, computer monitor, etc.

2. What is envelope?

Answer: Envelope is anything that is part of a building's exterior. A building's envelope includes windows, doors, walls, roofs and ground floors.

3. What is energy management?

Answer: In the report, Energy Management refers to practices that impact energy consumption at your facilities. These practices include how often and how effectively energy using equipment is inspected, maintained and operated to maximize energy efficiency, temperature set points, equipment operation schedules, etc. In the report, your energy management score is a reflection of how well the facility management staff is managing a particular facility's energy bill. The report's building model simulator generates an output parameter that provides an indication of how energy use compares to an expected energy use signature. A low score indicates that better management of your existing equipment and more aggressive control of schedules and set points could result in immediate energy savings

4. What is HVAC?

Answer: In the report, HVAC stands for Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning. The HVAC rank in your report is a measure of the relative age of HVAC equipment, as well as the efficiency potential of the equipment based on the plant and control types. In the report, there were a number of prescriptive measures and a number of potential/future measures related to HVAC. A low score in this report indicates that your HVAC system may need a more in-depth audit and could stand for some improvements or replacement with new and more efficient technology. In summation, details regarding HVAC system efficiency have been largely reserved for future site investigation.

5. My school building has a rank of 2 and will only improve to 4. Why can't it improve to 10?

Answer: The ranking improvement only reflects improvements stemming from the prescribed measures included in your report. Implementing these measures alone will only improve your building so much. Additional improvements such as those listed in Appendix C (i.e., future, potential, aspirational) could further improve the efficiency of your building and consequently the associated ranking.

6. What is a benchmarking score?

**Answer:** “Energy use benchmarking is a process that either compares the energy use of a building or group of buildings with other similar structures or looks at how energy use varies from a baseline. It is a critical step in any building upgrade project, because it informs organizations about how and where they use energy and what factors drive their energy use. Benchmarking enables energy managers to determine the key metrics for assessing performance, to establish baselines, and to set goals for energy performance. It also helps them identify building upgrade opportunities that can increase profitability by lowering energy and operating costs, and it facilitates continuous improvement by providing diagnostic measures to evaluate performance over time.” (US EPA 2008 Energy Star Building Manual)

In the context of your report, benchmarking is used in two ways. Depending on the ranking metric, it either: (a) compares facilities within your school district against themselves before and after implementing measures or (b) compares the facility against all other similar types of facilities across your region. Please refer to section 5.6 in the [Savings and Cost Analysis Engineering Documentation](#) found in the BIT for additional information on how the report’s ranking metrics function as benchmarks.

7. What is Normal TMY Month?

**Answer:** TMY stands for Typical Meteorological Year. Since weather changes from year to year, an average or TMY is used for a geographic zone to model energy use and potential savings at a specific facility.

8. One of my buildings says it has 3 envelope measures to implement. How do I find out what those measures are? On another table, it has listed some of the prescriptive measures, the costs and savings. Are some of these measures considered “envelope” measures? If so which ones?

**Answer:** Appendix B of your report tells you the prescriptive measures identified and the facilities where those measures were identified. The prescriptive measures directly related to the envelope include measures P-1 through P-7.

9. How do I know which lights need changing in my building? It says the number of measures for interior lights is 2. Does that mean 2 lights need changing? The table states I need to spend \$8 on retrofit interior incandescent light. How do I know where these two lights are?

**Answer:** Log into your Business Intelligence Tool (BIT) and look for the Audit Data area, link “Audit Measure Details”, clicking will prompt you to download an excel file. The file will contain the location and quantity of all identified prescriptive measures.

**10. A contractor in our town would like to study the report. Where can he get a copy of it and the technical details?**

**Answer: You may download and/or print a copy of your report by logging into the BIT Tool and clicking the Energy Audit Report link. However, in order to save time and paper, the information that contractors will most likely require for any given facility in a school district may found in Appendices A, B and C.**