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Asheville, North Carolina volunteers discovered that the district's oldest school - built in the 1920s - is also their most energy-efficient. (Photo: Courtesy of Asheville High School)

At this point in my life, I really shouldn't be surprised by what people will do in the name of love. But recently, I've been blown away by what people are doing out of their appreciation for older and historic schools.

Take Ron Miller, for example. He's a retired engineer living the good life in beautiful Asheville, North Carolina.

Guess what he does in his spare time?

Along with other retired scientists, Ron freely shares his expertise through [Waste Reduction Partners](#) (WRP) to help schools and other institutions become more energy-efficient.

Over the summer, WRP assessed nine school campuses and the central office of Asheville City Schools. After evaluating over a million square feet of building space, it turns out the oldest building on the campus—[Asheville High School](#)'s main building—is also the [most energy efficient](#).

As part of their work, WRP made recommendations for achieving further efficiencies in all the district's facilities. Talk about showing affection!

However much Ron appreciates quality construction, it's probably fair to say that no one loves school facilities more than Mary Filardo. From saving the Oyster-Adams Bilingual Elementary School in Washington, DC from closure to [researching the connection between schools and community](#), Mary appreciates the "[BEST](#)" qualities of older, neighborhood schools.

With Jeff Vincent from the [Center for Cities and Schools](#), Mary created a [joint use calculator](#). How cool is that?



A new "joint use" calculator helps schools better manage their operating expenses while encouraging the community's use of facilities on the week-ends and after school hours. This could help keep open schools threatened with closure such as Byrd Elementary in Selma, Alabama. (Photo: Courtesy of Byrd Elementary)

Struggling to find money for operations in their shrinking budgets, administrators can use this calculator to figure out ways to more economically share their space. Those of us struggling to keep older schools in use are popping the Champagne!

This brings me to how you can show your own love.

1. Instead of roses ... send your school district superintendent or school principal the link to the [joint use calculator](#).
2. Encourage students you know to submit their photos and essays describing why they love their historic school through a contest called [Through Your Lens](#).
3. Tell us why you care — what about that old school makes your heart beat a little faster each time you see it? Is it the big shade trees in the front, the bank of beautifully arched windows, or the fact that you can walk to see “your” team wallop the competition? Revisit “[10 Good Reasons to Show Historic Schools Some Love](#)” and add some more ideas.* Surely after almost a year we can get the list above 15!

Whatever the reason, it’s Valentine’s Day... so let everyone know why these places matter to you.

Renee Kuhlman is the director of special projects for the State & Local Partnerships and Policy department at the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

*You’ll need to add the ideas as comments to *this* post, as comments on the original one are closed. Thanks!

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