



Public Schools of Plainfield New Jersey

Office of Community Engagement Liaison

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PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS GO SOLAR Over 5,000 solar panels will be installed at seven schools

Plainfield, NJ - November 29, 2018 – Rows and rows of photovoltaic panels have been installed at Hubbard Middle School as the Plainfield Public School District turns to solar energy to save on electric bills. The district expects to save millions of dollars over the next fifteen years with the installation of cost-savings solar panels at seven of its 13 schools.

The project is possible through a Power Purchase Agreement with Spano Partners Holdings, LLC, which will be solely responsible for the project at no cost to the District.

Contractors began installing the more than 5,000 solar panels at Hubbard Middle School in September and are currently working at Plainfield High School, Emerson and Cedarbrook schools. The rooftop photovoltaic panels will be installed at seven district schools, including at Jefferson/PAAAS, Maxson and Washington Community School.

The installation of the solar panels at all seven schools is expected to be completed by December 31.

This is a dream come true for Sean Sutton, Plainfield Public Schools Facilities & Grounds Coordinator, who had been waiting more than six years for this project's approval.

"For years it was difficult to convince people this could work," said Sutton. "But we are very excited this is happening. This project will provide great savings that will be passed along to our students and their families. It's a win-win situation that will allow us to save energy and devote funds to other projects."

The first year the district will save approximately \$80,000 and the savings will double and triple as the years go by, to savings of almost \$2.5 million in energy bills over the next 15 years, said Andrew Conte, Senior Associate with Gabel Associates, the district's energy consultants.

The savings is possible because the rate per kWh (kilowatt) will be locked at 0.383/kWh for a term of 15 years. This means the district will not be subject to the variability of the utility

market, which could increase energy bills by up to 2.5% per year. The energy is also priced at a fixed rate that is lower than the local utility's retail rate.

The owner of the panels is Spano Partners Holdings, LLC, the firm solely responsible for the financing, design, permitting, procurement, construction, installation, operation and maintenance of the photovoltaic systems (PV). This third party agreement results in no upfront costs to the district.

"We are proud to include this project for our schools. It's a state-of-the-art addition for our District for the benefit of our students, our families and our community," said Ronald E. Bolandi, Interim Superintendent of Plainfield Public Schools. "There will be 46" LCD wall-mount flat screen displays at each school, at locations determined by the Plainfield School District, which will display a dashboard and allow access to information about the PV system for the students and general public to view in real time. Learning about this system will be continuous, which is an incredible prospect for our students. We thank our Board of Education for their vision and support."

Education Initiative

The energy production levels from the panels and associated savings will be displayed at LCD panels installed at each school, providing an opportunity for students to learn about how solar energy is collected and utilized. Grade-appropriate activities will provide students information on solar technology and the clean energy industry.

Number of Panels

The new solar panel array, which consists of 5,975 solar panels is capable of annually generating about 2,543,261 kWh of solar electricity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 1,893 metric tons of carbon per year. One hundred percent of the solar energy generated from the solar panels will directly offset Plainfield's current electricity usage.

Tracking

The solar panel installation is an educational opportunity as well. Advanced Solar Products, the engineering and procurement firm, responsible for the design, purchasing of materials and the successful completion of the construction of the project, will conduct lessons to educate students on the use of clean technology and will teach the students, through interaction with the solar power system's live data interface, how the system works. Teachers and students will be able to track the energy produced by these solar panels through an online dashboard and display television screens at the school that will provide statistics about electricity usage. In addition, new subjects will be incorporated into the school curriculum to address clean energy production and environmental science.

For more information, please call 908-731-4333 or email gmontealegre@plainfield.k12.nj.us.

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