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New Report: Solar at Pennsylvania K-12 Schools more than tripled over the last decade

State Grant Program awards \$22.6 million to accelerate solar growth at Pennsylvania K-12 Schools

Reading, PA—With a ranking as a Top 10 State for solar capacity at K-12 schools, Pennsylvania is emerging as a national leader in clean energy for schools. According to a [new report](#) from clean energy nonprofit Generation180, Pennsylvania K-12 schools more than tripled the amount of solar installed from 14 to 45 megawatts (MW) in the last 10 years. During the last decade, the number of statewide K-12 schools with solar installations nearly doubled from 63 to 124.

Last year, the Solar for Schools Act created a new opportunity for Pennsylvania schools to access the financial and educational benefits of solar energy. Yesterday, the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) announced the recipients of **73 grants totalling \$22.6 million from the Solar for Schools Grant Program** to help fund new solar projects at public schools. The grant program is helping to fund an estimated 42 MW of new solar capacity, which would almost double the solar power generated by statewide K-12 schools. Once installed, these solar installations are projected to save nearly \$5 million in annual energy costs, freeing up critical resources to invest in essential programming and enhanced classroom learning.

The Solar For Schools grants range between \$42,000 to \$500,000 (or up to 50% of total solar project costs). This funding can be stacked on top of federal energy tax credits, which are available to schools using Elective Pay. By combining state and federal incentives, a school could recoup between 60% and 100% of the solar project costs.

"Pennsylvania's schools are stepping up as clean energy leaders—not only cutting energy costs but also creating healthier learning environments and hands-on STEM opportunities for students," said **Shannon Crooker, Pennsylvania Director at Generation180**. "With new support from the Solar for Schools Grant Program and growing momentum across the state, we're just beginning to tap into the full potential of solar to power our schools and our future."

"I am so happy for each of these schools and excited to see names from nearly every corner of the state," said state **Representative Elizabeth Fiedler, sponsor of the Solar for Schools Act**

and Chair of the House Energy Committee. "I've heard from rural schools who plan to include their solar panels in agricultural education and from city schools that are thinking strategically about rooftop solar with limited space. I have no doubt that the recipients will benefit from the program's flexibility to meet their school's needs and to make the most of their strengths."

Solar adoption has doubled every five years at rural PA Schools

The new report also found that since 2010, solar adoption by schools in rural locales has doubled roughly every five years. Before 2020, solar adoption by Pennsylvania K-12 schools was concentrated in the eastern half of the state, particularly in urban and suburban communities in the southeastern region. Over the past five years, solar adoption by K-12 schools has expanded westward, with significant growth in the towns and rural communities of central Pennsylvania. New rural counties, such as Snyder, Perry, and Forest, have now joined the movement. While this momentum is promising, **only two percent of Pennsylvania's 6,000 K-12 schools statewide have installed solar energy projects**

Federal energy tax credit helps small rural school district save millions

In 2025, Huntingdon Area School District (HASD) became the first school district in Pennsylvania to complete a solar project that is eligible for the Clean Electricity Investment Credit using Elective Pay.. With two of three solar projects operational in 2024, the district plans to file for a federal energy tax credit through Elective Pay to secure over \$1 million, approximately 37% of the total solar project cost. By maximizing energy efficiency and installing solar arrays at multiple campuses, HASD is projected to save \$5.8 million in electricity bills over the next 20 years. These savings will be reinvested into critical educational needs and ensure long-term financial stability.

"Investing in solar is a win-win for our district—it strengthens our financial future while teaching our students the value of sustainability," said **Jennifer Mitchell, Superintendent of Huntingdon Area School District.** "By leveraging Elective Pay, we're able to tap into federal resources that made this project possible and redirect the savings back into the classroom where they're needed most."

This third-edition ***Powering a Brighter Future in Pennsylvania*** report follows a biennial national report from Generation180 detailing the growth and trends at U.S. K-12 schools that have embraced solar power.

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About Generation180

Generation180 is a national nonprofit working to inspire and equip people to take action on clean energy in their homes, schools, and communities. Instead of the doom and gloom of a warming planet, Generation180 is focused on the unparalleled opportunity for a cleaner, healthier, and more equitable clean energy future.

Our Electrify Our Schools (EOS) campaign empowers schools to create resilient campuses with electrified buildings and transportation powered by 100% clean energy. EOS expands access to clean energy at K-12 schools by providing resources and support to school decision-makers and community advocates, supporting peer-to-peer networks, sharing success stories, and advocating for stronger clean energy policies.