

New Report: Solar at K-12 Schools Quadrupled Nationwide During the Last Ten Years

Federal investments and tax incentives offer opportunities for continued solar growth at K-12 schools



CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA, UNITED STATES,

August 28, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Schools across the country are rapidly switching to solar power to meet their energy needs while gaining significant cost-savings, boosting climate resilience, and supporting workforce development, according to a new [report](#) from clean energy nonprofit Generation180. Since the start of 2014, the amount of solar capacity installed at K-12 schools has more than quadrupled nationwide.

According to *Brighter Future: A Study of Solar on K-12 Schools*, 5th edition, over 6.2 million U.S. K-12 students – or more than one in nine students – now attend a school that utilizes solar power. In 2022-2023, over 800 schools added solar arrays, which is enough for at least one school to go solar every day.

“The benefits of solar energy are now reaching a broad range of schools across the country, including schools in under-resourced communities that stand to gain the most from the cost savings and educational opportunities that solar technology provides. We want all schools and communities, regardless of their size, geography, or wealth, to have access to affordable, clean energy,” said Tish Tablan, lead report author and Senior Director of Generation180’s Electrify Our Schools Program.

The report finds that most K-12 schools switching to solar fund their projects through third-party ownership models that remove the barrier of upfront capital costs. The Inflation Reduction Act created the opportunity for schools to lower the cost of clean energy projects through tax credits – paid as cash reimbursements – for solar panels, battery storage, and other clean energy technologies.

[The Brighter Future report](#) also found that:

- With 1,814 megawatts of cumulative solar capacity, our nation’s K-12 schools generate enough solar energy to power the electricity use of all the households - in Denver, Colorado — over 330,000 households.

- The top five states for solar capacity at schools—California, New Jersey, Arizona, Massachusetts, and Connecticut—helped drive national growth of solar on schools.
- Minnesota, Maryland, and Pennsylvania are three innovative states that have created state-funded grant programs to support solar adoption by schools.

Solar schools bring job training, climate resilience, and energy savings to communities.

Schools with solar are reaping the benefits of energy cost savings that can be invested back into students and communities. Wayne County Public Schools will be first in West Virginia to solarize all school buildings by 2025. While historically relying on coal power in the past, the district is now installing 10,000 solar panels across its school sites and offering apprenticeships that will provide job training to high school students and enable them to help install solar on their schools.

Schools that pair battery storage with solar are helping their communities become climate resilient. Approximately 40 schools across 6 states have installed battery storage alongside their solar arrays to manage their energy consumption from the grid and provide backup power to their buildings. More than three-fourths of the installed battery projects at K-12 schools are in California, which has one of the longest-running storage incentive programs in the country.

Schools are participating in community solar projects that extend electric bill savings beyond school campus borders. In Denver, Colorado, solar canopies installed at schools are providing affordable, clean electricity to low-income families living in the community. The City of Denver and Denver Public Schools are collaborating on this community solar program that currently saves 44 local families an estimated 64% off their household electricity costs.

“While we’re excited to see growth in solar uptake, too many schools are still missing out on the many benefits that solar energy brings to students, communities, and the climate. We hope this report helps more schools to see what’s possible in their own districts and inspires them to take part in our country’s clean energy transition,” said Stuart Gardner, Executive Director of Generation180.

For a copy of the report, B-roll, photos, and other media assets, please see [this folder](#).

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.

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