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Solar, Wind Initiatives Will Create a Greener Belleville, Save Taxpayer Money

BELLEVILLE, NJ – January 24, 2023 – The Belleville School District is moving ahead with cutting-edge initiatives to create a cleaner, greener community.

And, while these projects are focused on preserving the environment, they will also be reducing energy bills for the schools while creating important lessons for students.

The district, under Superintendent of Schools Dr. Richard Tomko, has installed rooftop units capable of harnessing the vast (and free) energy of the sun.

These solar panels have been installed at Schools 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10, plus Belleville Middle School and Belleville High School. Solar-powered carport roofing has also been installed in Schools 8 and 10, and at Belleville High School.

Over the course of the 15-year power purchasing agreement, it is estimated that taxpayers will save \$2 million because the solar energy will power parking lot lights, classroom computers and more.

Tomko said the panels will be fitted with LED panels that will allow students and teachers to monitor how much energy is being saved each day, infusing lessons of green living into the classroom curriculum.

“It’s exciting to use energy-saving initiatives as real-world teaching tools in the classroom,” the superintendent said. “This will hopefully lead to important classroom discussions about fossil fuel alternatives, environmental awareness and more. Just studying the engineering behind the panels could inspire myriad STEM projects throughout the grade levels.”

In addition to the solar panels and carport roofing, three new light poles powered by solar and wind energy have been installed at the high school and one at School 9. The project was funded with \$107,912 in state money.

“While these lights will also reduce energy costs, their primary and immediate benefit will be safety-related,” noted Matthew Paladino, the district’s business administrator. “Keeping our grounds well-lit and keeping students and staff members safe and secure is always our priority.”

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