



Pennsylvania
Department of Environmental Protection



Pennsylvania
Department of Community
& Economic Development

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MEDIA CONTACT: DEP Newsroom, RA-EPNEWS@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Invests \$25 Million in Solar for Schools Program, Helping Schools Save Money and Transition to Clean Energy

Funding through the [Solar for Schools Program](#), including nearly \$450,000 for Steelton-Highspire, is helping schools across Pennsylvania transition to cleaner, renewable energy while reducing costs.

The program has helped more than 40 schools convert some of their electricity usage to solar energy, helping the environment and helping districts save money.

The Solar for Schools Program, created by Governor Josh Shapiro in 2024 to help generate more clean, affordable, and reliable energy while creating more jobs and lowering costs for Pennsylvanians, has so far invested \$27,188,960 in 84 schools across the Commonwealth.



Steelton, PA – Today, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Jessica Shirley and Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Secretary Rick Siger visited Steelton-Highspire School District’s new solar array alongside district and local officials to highlight the Shapiro Administration’s investment in clean energy to benefit schools across the Commonwealth, including an additional \$25 million in the 2026-27 budget for the [Solar for Schools program](#).

Funding through the [Solar for Schools program](#), including nearly \$450,000 for Steelton-Highspire, is helping schools across Pennsylvania transition to cleaner, renewable energy while reducing costs. The Steelton-Highspire School District is expected to save \$3.6 million over the next 20 years as a result of its solar investment.

“As we look at different options that can provide electricity to schools across Pennsylvania, solar is one of the cleanest, greenest options.” said **Secretary Shirley**. “Recipients of the Solar for Schools program, like Steelton-Highspire School District, are thinking to the future about how they can use the sun to power their buildings, save money, and decrease emissions to improve air quality for everyone.”

“The Solar for Schools program enables school districts across Pennsylvania to lower their electricity bills and invest those savings into their students,” said **Secretary Siger**. “Solar for Schools investments like this one provide schools with reliable zero-emissions technology, support Pennsylvania jobs, and lower the electricity burden for communities and schools.”

The Solar for Schools program, created by **Governor Josh Shapiro** in 2024 to help generate more clean, affordable, and reliable energy while creating more jobs and lowering costs for Pennsylvanians, has so far invested \$27,188,960 in 84 schools across the Commonwealth. Governor Shapiro secured another \$25 million in the [2026-2027 budget](#) to ensure the program continues. DCED has established a grant program that school districts, intermediate units, charter schools including cyber, regional, and a school for education of the deaf or the blind, area career and technical schools, specific trade and technical schools, and community colleges can use to fund solar energy projects. These grants aid in the purchase and installation of equipment, permit fees, energy storage, and utility interconnection. The [Pennsylvania Solar for Schools Toolkit](#) is organized into ten basic steps, and is designed specifically for school stakeholders in Pennsylvania to determine whether a solar project makes sense for their facility.

Steelton-Highspire School District (Steel-High) has been a leader in sustainability and the use of clean energy through innovative partnerships and forward-thinking that benefits the district's students and the surrounding community.

"The Steelton-Highspire School District is proud to be part of the Solar for Schools initiative and to provide our students with an opportunity to see how renewable energy, sustainability, and innovation are shaping our future," said **Steelton-Highspire School District Superintendent Willie Slade**. "This partnership is about more than installing solar technology—it is about creating authentic learning experiences that connect classroom instruction to real-world careers. We want our students to understand that they can be leaders in building a cleaner, more sustainable future for their families, our community, and Pennsylvania."

Steel-High received a Solar for Schools grant in 2025 for \$446,363 to install high-efficiency solar panels to reduce energy expenses and carbon emissions, while also integrating renewable energy education into the district curriculum, providing hands-on STEM learning.

Steel-High went on to install a 1.7 MW solar array in an area that was previously a dumping ground for debris from Hurricane Agnes. The array covers 100 percent of the district's electricity needs through a power purchase agreement, saving \$3.6 million over 20 years.

In collaboration with the McClure Company, the district has implemented a series of energy efficient upgrades that have reduced the carbon footprint while creating substantial cost savings, which are reinvested into the district. In addition, the school's collaboration with First Student has six electric school buses that not only lower operational costs, but also provide a quieter, healthier transportation experience for students.

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