

NEWS

5,200 solar panels will save Manchester \$100,000 each year

By [Jesse Leavenworth](#)

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Solar panels atop Highland Park Elementary School in Manchester.
Manchester Public Schools

MANCHESTER — Solar panels atop seven local public buildings promise annual energy savings of \$100,000, town officials said.

About 5,200 panels have been installed at six elementary schools and the water and sewer building over about the past two years. Five of the seven systems are to be energized by the end of the year, and the last two will go online in early 2023.

The systems were made possible in part through the Connecticut Green Bank's solar municipal assistance program (Solar MAP). Manchester entered a 20-year power purchase agreement with the Green Bank, town General Manager Steve Stephanou said. The town buys power produced from the solar energy panels and saves money because the cost is less than the price for the same amount of power from Eversource, Stephanou said.

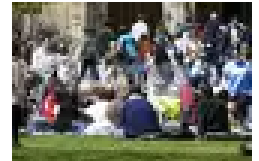
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The project, he said, "showcases the town's ongoing commitment to prioritizing renewable efforts and is one step closer to ensuring a cleaner and more sustainable future for the Manchester community."

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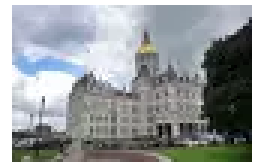
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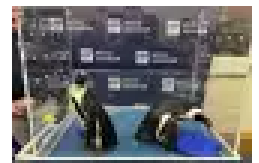
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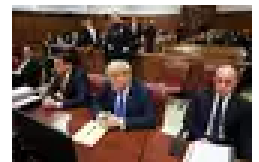
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"I appreciate all the work and collaboration that it has taken to get this far and am excited that we are positioned to have lower energy costs for years ahead," Manchester Schools Superintendent Matt Geary said. "But more important is how this benefits our students. Investing in clean, renewable energy is one more way we can ensure a better future for them."

Established by the General Assembly in 2011, the Green Bank and its private investment partners have distributed about \$2.26 billion in capital for clean energy projects across the state.

Through Solar MAP, the Green Bank provides technical support to municipalities to develop projects on municipal buildings. The Green Bank also provides financing for the solar systems through power purchase agreements, which allows a municipality to get solar with no upfront installation costs, no new debt to incur and no operations and maintenance costs, town officials said

The installer was Greenskies Clean Focus, based in North Haven. Inclusive Prosperity Capital, a non-profit organization, partners with Green Bank to own and maintain the system.

Aside from the solar MAP project, students this fall returned to a recently renovated and expanded Buckley Elementary School, a net-zero energy building due to geothermal heating and cooling, solar panels and other energy-saving construction features. In addition to rooftop panels, Buckley [hosts a "SmartFlower,"](#) which uses advanced robotics and automation to track the sun, making up to 40 percent more energy than traditional stationary solar panels, according to town officials. The flower unfolds each morning, tracks the sun and closes at sunset.

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Jesse Leavenworth

REPORTER



Jesse Leavenworth is a reporter with Hearst Connecticut Media Group. He is a New Britain native living in Hebron, U.S. Army veteran (1979-83) and married (Lynn) father of three (Kerry, Kate and John). Jesse worked as a reporter and editor for about 35 years for The Hartford Courant, covering all kinds of stories across the state. Jesse is especially interested in Connecticut history, crime, veterans affairs and news of the weird.

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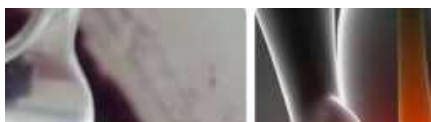


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