



**CERTS**  
CLEAN ENERGY RESOURCE TEAMS

# Solar Energy for Your School

Pine River-Backus Schools

**Get ready to energize your students' education!**

**Imagine this headline: "All Schools in Minnesota Utilize Solar Power."**

Wouldn't it be amazing if solar energy powered the education of our state's 845,404 students? It might not be so far off. Most schools do not currently have solar, but there has never been a better time for them to take advantage of clean energy opportunities. A dramatic drop in the cost of solar panels, combined with new financing choices, has now made solar widely available.

## WHY GO SOLAR?

### 1 **Cost Savings**

The cost of solar panels has dropped 65% over the last decade, and schools can avoid the upfront investment and ongoing maintenance requirements through third-party ownership.

### 2 **Education**

Access to solar allows students and teachers to connect STEM education with new technology on school grounds and with one of the fastest growing job markets in the state.

### 3 **The Environment**

Solar schools offset an estimated 1 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually, equivalent to the greenhouse gas emissions from nearly 221,000 cars.

### 4 **Community Leadership**

Schools are at the center of the community. Solar is a great way to communicate that sustainability is a key value and inspire others.

Morris Area High School

**LEARN MORE**

**CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org/SolarSchools**





## CONSIDERATIONS

**Ok, so you've decided that solar makes sense for your school. But then you're faced with lots of decisions:**

- Buy it outright or enter into a power purchase agreement (PPA)?
- Rooftop, ground-mount or carport?
- How can we work with our electric utility?
- What rebates or other incentive can we tap into?
- When and how should we engage the school board?

**We can answer your questions and help you move forward!**

CERTs has been working with schools to make solar a reality for years, and in the process, has developed unbiased tools and resources for you to use free of charge: a site selection toolkit, model RFP, state contract details, calculators, and more. Our staff are here to help! Contact Peter Lindstrom at 612-625-9634 or [plindstr@umn.edu](mailto:plindstr@umn.edu).



## Minnesota school solar projects at a glance



### SOUTH ST. PAUL

Each day over 3,600 students fill the hallways and classrooms of South St. Paul Public Schools. In 2019, the school board approved adding solar to Kaposia Elementary. They got a contract in July and installed solar in 2020.



### RED WING

Red Wing Public Schools covers up to 120% of its energy needs with a 6MW solar garden on their property. The energy is shared by their six schools and the community. Over 25 years the district will save \$7.7M on energy and earn \$1M in lease revenue.



### CHISAGO LAKES

Chisago Lakes School District flipped the switch on five rooftop solar projects in the district along with a community solar subscription. Solar will not only save energy dollars, but also provide learning opportunities and help meet sustainability goals.



### PINE RIVER-BACKUS

The field behind Pine River-Backus Schools is now home to a large solar array expected to cover about 80 percent of their electricity needs, at a discount to their typical electricity rates. It's also getting students thinking about clean energy careers.

[LEARN MORE](#)

[CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org/SolarSchools](https://CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org/SolarSchools)