

Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

April 20, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Members of the Board of Education  
  
From: Monifa B. McKnight, Interim Superintendent of Schools  
  
Subject: Renewable Energy Options (02-22-2022-01-A)

**Question**

During the Operating Budget Hearing, Ms. O'Looney requested additional information regarding the role of renewal energy options as noted in Angelina Xu's testimony.

**Response**

Increasing renewable energy is part of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) strategy to achieve greenhouse gas reductions. Investing in infrastructure improvements to reduce building energy use provides an even greater long-term benefit. Forecasts predict that both conventional energy and clean energy prices will rise; therefore, by reducing overall consumption, MCPS will be better equipped to contain utility costs and reduce demand on the regional electrical grid as more and more entities transition to electrification.

MCPS purchases approximately 38% of its energy from renewable sources—more than double the amount required by the state. Annually, state requirements incrementally increase and include requirements for solar, and in the near future, offshore wind. Since MCPS is subject to market conditions, prices for clean energy greatly fluctuate from year to year. There are three types of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) that can be purchased. The first two are purchased as part of our electric utility usage, and are purchased from facilities that actually produce energy within the region. The third type, voluntary credits, are generated across the nation; however, these do not offer the local reduced pollution benefit.

Currently, MCPS is expanding rooftop solar production at eight facilities. Four new facilities will come online in 2023, and four additional facilities in 2024. These facilities have been selected because either they are new facilities designed to accept solar panels or they have newly replaced roofs. We also are piloting a solar canopy at one facility which we hope to expand. It is important to note that, depending on site design, rooftops in general offer higher production potential. However, rooftop solar is not a feasible solution for all buildings. Rooftop solar cannot be placed

on facilities with “green roofs” that were designed to control the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff. Also, when retrofitting existing buildings, structural analysis must be conducted to confirm safe loading tolerances. Rooftop equipment and age/condition of the roofing membranes must be evaluated before systems successfully can be installed.

As included in the new draft Board of Education Policy ECA, *Transforming from Energy Conservation to Sustainability*, MCPS is committed to promoting “design strategies and retrofits to make new and existing buildings more sustainable and resilient by designing every construction project to maximize solar production potential and minimize energy use intensity, considering a balanced facilities and infrastructure portfolio across the system”

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Eugenia S. Dawson, chief of finance and operations, or Mr. Seth P. Adams, director of facilities management, via email.

MBM:ESD:SPA:lmt

Copy to:

Executive Staff

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