

News Release

Everett Public Schools

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Cedar Wood Elementary wins PUD solar power grant

Beginning next fall, not only will Cedar Wood Elementary students have a demonstration solar power array on their school roof to incorporate into their science, environmental, social studies and language arts lessons, but that solar power array will also be generating some of the kilowatts used in the school lights.

The solar array and the opportunities for students at all grade levels across the district to learn from it are possible because of a grant from the Snohomish County Public Utility District's (PUD) [Planet Power](#) program. Construction of the \$15,000-\$20,000 array will begin before school is out.

The Planet Power program allows PUD customers to voluntarily support the development of environmentally-friendly energy sources. Up until now, the program has focused primarily on supporting large-scale wind projects in Washington and Oregon, but also has funded some small-scale solar projects like this grant to Cedar Wood Elementary. Starting on March 31, the PUD will be shifting program funds (net of program operating costs) to solely support the development of local, small-scale, renewable projects together with related education and outreach activities. The PUD is working with Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) to help in the selection and installation of the solar projects and provide the renewable energy education curriculum.

Cedar Wood Principal David Jones is especially appreciative of his school's solar array growing from community contributions. As he notes, "A project like this involves cooperation starting with individual donations and extending to all departments within the district." Writing the grant itself captured the imagination, energy and expertise of staff from the curriculum department to the facilities and maintenance staff. Ultimately, this solar array will give back for years — in the form of student "aha's," reduced environmental impact and ultimate reduction of public dollars spent on utility costs.

Bonneville and the PUD were impressed with the Cedar Wood application because the school and district already are committed to environmental stewardship and because the district precommitted to making the solar array at Cedar Wood a successful community venture. The application cited many reasons why Everett Public Schools in general and Cedar Wood Elementary specifically are ideal candidates for one of the small number of solar grants that the PUD and BEF plans this year.

1. Cedar Wood is already energy-aware and eager to help carry that important message to further school and community audiences. Cedar Wood is one of Snohomish County's *Outstanding Recycler of the Year* schools.
2. Cedar Wood's 2008 retrofit included energy management systems with off-site monitoring and management controls to conserve energy.
3. The school's roof captures southern sunlight, is clear of sun-blocking trees and is a secure location for the array.
4. The district already has a strong history of energy conservation and partners with PUD Energy Consultants on ways to reduce energy costs, takes advantage of the most efficient energy-saving

devices and provides walking and biking zones for students and staff. These measures include upgrading 2,000 computers across the district with energy-conserving flat screen monitors.

Now that the school knows the solar array is theirs, plans are being finalized to incorporate it into student activities. The district's elementary through high school science *Course of Study* is being modified to include a focus on the interconnectedness of ecosystems, energy resources and solar energy generation. For example, high school freshmen across the district will use data from the elementary school demonstration system at Cedar Wood to study the influence of pollution-free energy generation on operational costs and the environment.

When the PUD hosts its annual [The Power of Solar](#) workshop next year, Cedar Wood students and staff will collaborate to co-host that community information event.

Cedar Wood students will use their language arts skills to produce a brochure about the project which they will share with community members. Their brochure will showcase the benefits of using solar power and participation in the PUD [Planet Power](#) program. Students will even be measuring the impact of their marketing efforts by tracking [Planet Power](#) participation levels over the next two years.

"We absolutely intend to carry messages about the power and benefits of solar energy to the school's community," said Jones. "What is also exciting is that this school-based project has captured the imagination of teachers and administrators across the district who are committed to increasing student awareness and understanding of the need for renewable power sources and who are incorporating that into classroom lessons."

"Imagine a day when a site like Cedar Wood could generate enough power to supply all of its energy needs for the year. And, imagine the impact that would have on the way our students think about their futures."

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