

How-To Guide for Schools Going Solar

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Identify Solar Champions and Assemble a Team

- Include students, teachers and staff from facilities and procurement
- Work together to educate the school community about solar
- Consider help from outside experts

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Compare Financing Options

- Assess ownership options including direct or third-party (PPAs)
- Investigate federal, state and utility incentives

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Prepare and Issue the Request for Proposal

- Ensure the RFP meets statutory requirements
- Clearly define the project
- Include educational opportunities

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Oversee Construction and Installation

- Hold regular meetings to monitor progress on milestones
- Properly document regulatory compliance and system performance
- Perform regular inspections

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Understand Energy Needs and Estimate Solar Potential

- Review history of electricity use, costs and demand charges
- Estimate both project costs and potential savings
- Estimate solar potential, conduct a solar site assessment

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Identify Local, State and Utility Hurdles

- Learn local planning and zoning requirements and permitting processes
- Talk to local solar experts to identify potential regulatory hurdles
- Investigate net-metering opportunities

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Evaluate and Select the Solar Developer

- RFP review team can include students and others along with key staff
- Develop a list of key criteria and a scoring plan in advance
- Be sure to get and check references

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Monitor Performance, Operations and Maintenance

- If necessary, develop an Operations and Maintenance agreement
- Ensure ongoing safety of the solar installation site

