

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 197

MAKING A SUSTAINABLE COMMITMENT

Mark Fortman, Director of Operations for Independent School District 197, has been implementing sustainable programs within the district since 2000. From recycling and composting to LED light bulbs, ISD 197 has always looked for ways to save money, increase efficiency and reduce waste. Solar energy was a logical place to turn.

ISD 197 furthered its renewable commitment by installing rooftop solar arrays on five buildings starting in 2018. The district is projected to save \$750,000 on electricity over the next 25 years, but due to limited roof space the arrays only account for about 5% of their total energy usage. Mark wanted to find solution that would offset the rest of the district's usage without costing them any money upfront, and community solar fit the bill.

“It was an easy sell for me to the school board because the economics are clear. The district is in a positive cash flow position from day one.”

- Mark Fortman, ISD 197 Director of Operations



THE ECONOMICS ARE CLEAR

According to Mark, community solar has allowed ISD 197 to meet its sustainability goals while providing savings to be used in the classroom. “When we were able to bring the math to the board and show the long term benefits to the district - real dollars, real savings - that end up going back into the classroom, it became an economic certainty that we would move forward with community solar.”

**BUILDING CLEANER
ENERGY, LEAVING
BEHIND A BETTER WORLD.**

PROJECT DETAILS:



\$200,000
Annual Savings



\$0
Upfront Costs



6,031 Tons
CO2 Offset Annually



100%
Energy Usage Offset

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completed projects at:**

www.newenergyequity.com/experience



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BENEFITS BEYOND SAVINGS

ISD 197's decision to meet their energy needs with community solar didn't just save them money. It allowed them to engage with students, become recognized for sustainability, and provide continuing education opportunities for faculty.

ENGAGING STUDENTS

Using their solar system's online energy dashboard, educators were able to give their students an interactive example of solar energy being generated in real-time.

RECOGNIZING SUSTAINABILITY

After adding community solar to their mix of sustainable practices, the district went on to receive the Green Ribbon award, a nationally recognized accolade from the U.S. Department of Education.

INVOLVING EDUCATORS

New Energy Equity hosted a free workshop for ISD 197 educators focused on bringing renewable energy concepts into the classroom. The workshop provided the educators with lesson plans and solar activity kits to use with their students.



BRING SOLAR TO YOUR SCHOOL

As a New Energy Equity client, standards based Solar Curricula and Educator Workshops are available for your school or district free of charge.

Watch interviews with Mark and Lisa on our website and see if solar is right for your school: [newenergyequity.com/project/isd-197](https://www.newenergyequity.com/project/isd-197)

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**"IT'S HARD TO
ENCOURAGE KIDS TO
BE EXCITED ABOUT
LEARNING ABOUT
ENERGY. THIS IS ONE
WAY THAT THEY CAN
ACTUALLY SEE IT IN
ACTION"**



Lisa Johnson,
Sustainability Manager
ISD 197

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