

As the negative impacts of climate change continuously progress, prevention of the contributors to climate change need to be enacted. This prevention must be a direct way to limit the use of fossil fuels, the leading cause to climate change. In order to successfully combat climate change, changes within Dodgeville High School need to be implemented.

Schools are one of the dominant contributors to climate change. According to Harvard Graduate School of Education, schools are one of the largest consumers of energy, producing the “equivalent of 18 coal-fired power plants or 15 million cars” each year (Bauld, 2021). The emission of fossil fuels results in “89% of global carbon dioxide emissions” (ClientEarth, 2022). Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that traps heat in the earth’s atmosphere. This trapped heat results in many negative impacts on Earth such as frequent drought, rising sea levels, and harm to animals affected by the destruction of their habitats. Rather than viewing climate change as a tremendous, inexorable problem, it is crucial that schools like Dodgeville High School take action to create a Clean Energy Transition Plan.

There are various solutions to create an eco-friendly school environment. One of the most beneficial ways for both students, faculty, and the environment is to utilize natural sunlight. According to recent studies, “15% of the world’s energy consumption” is from the use of artificial lighting (Ledified, 2022). Instead of using light bulbs to light the many rooms and hallways of Dodgeville High School, natural lighting can be maximized to limit the amount of artificial light used during the day. This can be done through energy-efficient glazing, windows and skylights that are created through insulated glass to reduce temperature from exposure to prolonged light, and transparent walls. Not only will this reduce Dodgeville High School’s carbon footprint, it will have a positive impact on students and faculty. Studies have recently

confirmed that natural lighting causes “students [to] learn faster” and “teacher morale improves” (SaftiFirst, 2018). By creating an open space for natural light to enter, the atmosphere of the school will see improvements when students and faculty are in a more comfortable, natural environment. However, the Clean Energy Transition Plan should not end there.

Rather than focusing solely on the short term solutions, it is critical that long term benefits of costly expenditures are taken into account. The most common actions now being implemented into the world to counter climate change is the use of renewable energy. Solar panels on the roof of Dodgeville High School would be the most reasonable option to produce this energy. Although it is a costly improvement, “after five to fifteen years” the production of renewable energy will surpass the cost of nonrenewable energy currently used to power the school (Sandy, 2022). In addition the school’s carbon footprint will decrease by 20 times compared to nonrenewable energy sources (Lawrence, 2021). Iowa County’s Clean Energy Alliance - Now program is currently partnering with Legacy Solar Cooperative until the end of the 2022 year. Through this partnership Dodgeville High School will be able to receive a free initial solar assessment and will be able to support local businesses such as “Timmerman’s Talent, Eagle Point Solar, and All Sky Energy” (Iowa County Solar Group, n.d.) . Not only will the transition to renewable energy benefit the environment and local businesses, but it will benefit the surrounding students and faculty. Students will be able to be educated on energy sustaining technology utilized around the school. This will lead to an increase of curiosity surrounding the impacts of climate change and the reality of students being able to cause change. The school administration will also be able to use the money saved from renewable energy to increase faculty pay and make other needed capital improvements to the school.

A Clean Energy Transition Plan is critical for Dodgeville High School. By executing this plan successfully, Dodgeville School District will become a leader in the transition to an eco-friendly world. The support of the community will create an informed discussion on the importance of combating climate change while the prevention of its negative consequences is still attainable. Dodgeville High School has the authority and resources to transition the community of Dodgeville into an eco-friendly environment; it is time Dodgeville High School becomes the change it continuously teaches.

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