Save The Date: Soquel Union ESD to “Flip the Switch” on New Solar Structures



Santa Cruz, CA - Mark your calendars! The Soquel Union Elementary School District invites the community to “flip the switch” on its brand-new solar structures at **Santa Cruz Gardens Elementary School** on October 27, 2023 at 11 a.m.

“We are excited to turn on our new solar panels for the first time,” said **Santa Cruz Gardens Elementary School, Carlo Albano**. “This is a critical next step in our mission to contribute to a more sustainable future and set our students up for success in the classroom. **As a school with a Science and Gardening Emphasis (SAGE), the move to renewable energy enhances our core mission of cultivating student companionship and allyship as Stewards of the Earth.”**

The panels, which are mounted to shade structures, provide shaded outdoor dining and learning areas for students. In addition to generating energy, they also enhance student comfort and create more opportunities to spend time outdoors whilst studying or enjoying lunch with peers.

The District’s infrastructure modernization program first embarked upon in 2021, also includes new districtwide Building Automation Systems (BAS) and backup power for New Brighton Middle School. Combined, the backup battery storage and new solar panels reduce the District’s reliance on utility power. The BAS and solar implementations enable the District to hedge against rising utility rates with less energy consumption.

On the horizon, the District will get new windows, smart irrigation control systems, and a modernized indoor lighting system to further reduce its need for energy. Along with these upgrades, adding energy-efficient air conditioning to classrooms will help students thrive in a comfortable environment more conducive to academic success. With each infrastructure improvement, the District makes strides toward a more sustainable future by shrinking the size of its carbon footprint and offsetting rising energy and electrical usage.

“This bold infrastructure revitalization program reflects the values we hope to instill in our students,” said **Superintendent Scott Turnbull**. “By investing in our students, we hope to create future-thinking, responsible leaders who move forward as stewards of the environment.”

The October 27 event is open to the public. The District looks forward to celebrating with the Soquel community.