



UConn

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

CONTACT:

Jorge Garcia
Bridgeport Public Schools
Director of Building Operations
jgarcia3@bridgeportedu.net
203-275-2730

Amy Thompson
Systems Engineering
Associate Professor-in-Residence
amy.2.thompson@uconn.edu
860-486-8462

For Immediate Release

UConn-Led Effort Wins Nationwide Competition for K-12 Schools Energy Efficiency and Partnership Innovation

(STORRS) – [The U.S. Department of Energy \(DOE\) announced](#) that it has selected a proposal submitted by the University of Connecticut (UConn) and Bridgeport Connecticut Public Schools (BPS), to implement comprehensive energy efficiency and renewable projects at two Bridgeport public schools through the U.S. DOE’s Office of State and Community Energy Programs. The project was one of only 24 projects selected nationwide after over 1,000 concept papers were submitted early in 2023.

Public engagement with this funding opportunity has been unprecedented.

“Connecticut’s flagship state university is honored to be part of this effort,” George M. Bollas, Director of UConn’s Pratt & Whitney Institute for Advanced Systems Engineering, said. “The design of smart, healthy, and resilient schools for the low-income Connecticut environmental justice community in Bridgeport is well aligned with the mission of the University to support the growth and prosperity of the state. For our Institute, whose Associate Director of Academic Programs and Director of its SmartBuildings CT program, professor Amy Thompson, led this effort, it is a great opportunity to strengthen our green energy and climate change research portfolio, and engage with and support communities of the state by translating systems engineering methods to practices that have direct impact on Connecticut’s smart and energy efficient schools effort.”

The DOE funding will support an effort to design and implement equipment retrofits and upgrades for two Bridgeport K-12 schools that will serve as demonstration sites for all 39 Bridgeport schools, and for thousands statewide and nationally. The projects focus on the use of renewables and smart control systems to achieve deep energy savings and create healthy learning environments. The grant will also support workforce development initiatives in the state as well as dissemination of project results. The total award for two projects and support for the energy efficiency workforce development and training is \$3.6 million, of which over \$3 million is expected to be invested in technology and upgrades for the schools.

“Bridgeport Public Schools is enthused to have been chosen to be a part of such innovative, groundbreaking work,” said Bridgeport Public Schools Superintendent Alyshia Perrin. “The opportunity to conserve energy while improving the classroom setting with air quality controls and saving much needed dollars to support other educational initiatives, creates a blueprint for other schools in the district to do the same. As we move into the future, we must make a concerted effort to sustain energy, reduce pollutants and increase levels of comfortability in our school for all stakeholders. Being chosen to be a part of the Renew America’s Schools program, will allow us to support our school communities while having a greater impact on our community blueprint as well.”

After receiving feedback on 1,000 initial proposals, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) from 44 states submitted 236 eligible Full Applications, totaling \$1.62 billion in requests. Due to high demand and

overwhelming evidence of public need, DOE more than doubled the first tranche of funding from \$80 million to \$178 million to support the program.

The ENERGIZE CT programs administered by United Illuminating, an Avangrid Company, is a partner in the grant and will provide incentives and rebates to support the project.

“We at Avangrid are pleased to partner with UConn and the City of Bridgeport to bring innovative energy-saving technologies and workforce development initiatives to two Bridgeport public schools,” said Hammad Chaudry, Senior Manager of Conservation & Load Management Programs at United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas, and Connecticut Natural Gas, subsidiaries of Avangrid. “By providing incentives, rebates, and in-kind services through EnergizeCT, this award will extend the cost savings and environmental sustainability associated with energy efficiency programs to the next generation of Bridgeport residents.”

The two schools will receive deep energy retrofits by installing Siemens controls and building management systems, new condensing boilers, heat pump water heaters, VFD’s, and energy efficient lighting with controls. The schools will also receive retro commissioning of heating and cooling systems to improve energy efficiency and indoor air quality. BPS will install solar and battery systems where possible to lower GHG emissions and electricity costs, and to provide resiliency to these schools that serve disadvantaged communities as emergency shelters.

The project will also support workforce development by funding students in apprenticeship programs with scholarships at the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System and provide internships for engineering students at Housatonic Community College (HCC) and UConn who will work with Loureiro Engineering to support engineering design, construction management, and measurement and verification activities. The workforce development programs will invest over \$150,000 in scholarships, education, and training programs for construction trades, technicians, and engineers in Connecticut. K-12 learning modules will be developed and delivered to BPS students by [UConn’s Vergnano Institute for Inclusion](#), led by its Executive Director Stephany Santos, on energy efficient technologies for schools and their impacts on student health and learning. UConn will partner with local government agencies and Sustainable CT to disseminate project lessons learned and results to other school systems in Connecticut.

This competitive grant is a part of the \$500 million Renew America’s Schools program, which aims to help K-12 public schools across the country make energy improvements that: improves air quality and occupant comfort in schools; reduces energy use and energy costs; lowers emissions; promotes STEM education, career and technical education and workforce development.

“I would like to thank the U.S. Department of Energy for awarding Bridgeport’s Public Schools with an Energy Efficiency Grant,” said Bridgeport Mayor Joe Ganim. “It’s an honor to receive funding to help provide our students with infrastructure improvements that can not only benefit our sustainability initiatives but will also be a great addition to the learning environments to our students. Bridgeport students deserve access to healthy learning spaces while influencing the importance of energy efficiency. With this grant, we hope this will serve as a model for adaptation in the City of Bridgeport to continue our journey towards being an environmentally friendly city.”

When implemented, the planned projects are expected to lower energy usage by 1,000 megawatt hours and 32,000 CCF per year resulting in an expected minimum of \$200,000 per year savings in energy costs for the two schools.

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[About UConn Engineering:](#)

UConn School of Engineering is a powerhouse for research and engineering education in the State of Connecticut and beyond. We provide 51 percent of the State’s engineering graduates. We work with

local and national industry to address pressing technological challenges and to strengthen our manufacturing base. We value entrepreneurship and innovation, and our students and faculty actively develop startups and new technologies in support of economic development. Equally important, initiatives in engineering for human rights, brownfields, cybersecurity and other current issues demonstrate our enduring commitment to addressing major challenges facing our society.

About Bridgeport Public Schools:

The mission of Bridgeport Public Schools is to inspire our diverse community to work together in order to serve our students. We will support the development of excellent leadership, and utilize our unique resources to challenge and cultivate well-balanced individuals who seek knowledge and make significant contributions to society throughout their lives. The Bridgeport School District is the second-largest school system in Connecticut, servicing approximately 21,000 students. It also ranks lowest among the Connecticut school districts on the economic scale.