

# Carson City schools awarded \$712,250 for STEM, sustainability education

By Dan Davis

Carson City School District

As part of Tesla's K-12 Investment Fund, the Carson City School District is the most recent recipient of more than \$700,000 in grant funding. The money will help fund a district-wide sustainability initiative for the next three years.

The \$712,250 fund comes as part of Tesla's commitment through education grants to encourage students of all backgrounds to consider careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) or sustainability, and to develop the next generation of engineers in Nevada.

Through community partnerships and by linking sustainability to its strategic plan, Carson City School District, Nevada's most energy-efficient school district, will continue to wring savings out of schools by

advancing district initiatives and catalyzing education for sustainability. This collaborative effort is made possible through GreenPrint with the Green Schools National Network, Carson City, Project Recharge through Envirolution and Tesla.

"This collaborative multi-year partnership will lead to the advancement of district-wide sustainability initiatives and strategic plan goals that will impact the entire teaching staff while strengthening city and school initiatives," said Mark Korinek, director of operation services for the Carson City School District. "Connecting the district to a broader national collaborative through the Green School Catalyst Network will facilitate Carson City School District to become a national model for district and city-wide sustainability."

The three-year objectives for the school district's

sustainability initiative are designed to reduce the ecological footprint of the district, increase cost efficiencies, implement an ecosystem mapping project and have 95 percent of high school graduates from Carson City participate in a minimum of two significant energy education experiences.

The expected impact of the Tesla grant (2020-2023) includes more than 450 teachers furthering education for sustainability, more than 16,700 hours of professional development and coaching, \$50,000 of instructional resources and more than 8,550 students supplied with resources, inspiration and direction to further sustainability initiatives throughout their careers and among the communities they live, work and serve.

More significantly, the school district hopes to



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demonstrate the sustainability initiative's effect on student engagement, increase in student achievement and impact to social and emotional learning. The initiative will incorporate

quantitative and qualitative research that will help identify mindset shifts and social and emotional development throughout the program.

The school district already has an energy dashboard where schools can integrate the data with teaching and learning. It also hopes the ecosystem mapping project will identify an array of sustainability jobs, experts and opportunities for students to pursue.

In September, the school district announced hands-on STEM grant funds for middle school STEM projects received from Tesla's K-12 Education Investment Fund, the Nevada Department of Education and Project Lead The Way. And in October,

elementary and middle school students took tours designed to explore career options for STEM.

The Carson City School District touts the lowest energy expenditures, on a per pupil basis, of all Nevada school districts. The district is also pleased to announce the renewal of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star certification, which signifies their buildings perform in the top 25 percent of similar facilities nationwide for energy efficiency and meets strict energy efficiency performance levels set by the EPA. As of December, nine out of the 10 schools in the district were recognized again for their performance levels.



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BOB FREDLUND | 775.720.8501  
S.0033860 | bob@nevadastyle.net



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