

Baker-Polito Administration Awards Renewable Thermal Grants to Public Schools

Savings to Benefit the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts

BOSTON – April 29, 2015– The Baker-Polito Administration today announced grant funding for Heath Elementary School in Heath and the Hawlemont Elementary School in Charlemont to convert to highly efficient biomass boilers from their existing oil heating systems. Two grants totaling \$355,375 are the third and fourth to be awarded for implementation from the Schools and Public Housing Integrating Renewables and Efficiency (SAPHIRE) Program.

“We are committed to working closely with municipalities across the Commonwealth to reduce energy costs, support local energy projects, and strengthen local economies through energy investments,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “This program provides Massachusetts with the opportunity to allow school buildings to reduce costs and more efficiently manage their energy use.”

“By providing schools across the state with the tools necessary to reduce their reliance upon heating oil, the Commonwealth will take a pivotal step towards ensuring the further reduction of greenhouse gas emissions,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton. “The conversion projects in Heath and Charlemont highlight Massachusetts’ commitment to minimizing climate change impacts, and I applaud these regional school districts for their proactive approach towards an efficient heating system.”

These investments together will save at least an estimated \$30,000 annually by using a less expensive and cleaner fuel source. Both school buildings are also planning to add additional insulation and upgrade the lighting this summer with assistance from National Grid.

“With nearly one-third of total energy costs going toward heating our buildings, Massachusetts school districts are searching for more cost-effective and sustainable alternatives to heating oil,” said Department of Energy Resources Acting Commissioner Dan Burgess. “Installing renewable energy heating systems in schools demonstrate how these technologies can deliver significant energy cost savings, as well as provide learning opportunities and comfortable environments for students.”

The [SAPHIRE Program](#) helps Massachusetts public schools combine renewable heating and cooling with energy efficiency improvements to achieve deeper cuts in their energy costs. The program is administered by the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) in collaboration with the Massachusetts School Buildings Authority (MSBA). SAPHIRE offers feasibility studies, design and engineering studies and construction funding assistance to K-12 public school buildings pursuing renewable thermal technology, including biomass heating, solar thermal, and/or heat pumps.

“It’s great news to see the Baker-Polito Administration making these important investments in our western Franklin County schools,” said State Senator Benjamin B. Downing, Senate Chairman of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy. “These projects will serve to reduce the schools environmental impact and as a learning device for students.”

The program is funded by an allocation of approximately \$1.7 million in Alternative Compliance Payment (ACP) funds and a \$715,000 U.S. Department of Energy grant. ACP funds are paid by electric retail suppliers if they have insufficient Renewable or Alternative Energy Certificates to meet their compliance obligations under the Renewable and Alternative Portfolio Standard programs. The U.S. DOE grant provides staffing support.

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