

Lena Lin

Lena Lin

linlenaa@gmail.com

Bloomington High School South

Day 20 Greenest

### **Research/Sources**

Primary Source of Energy + Location: Coal plant in Indianapolis, 60+ miles away

Clean Energy Initiatives/Policies/Projects:

- Monroe County Energy Challenge:

<https://bloomington.in.gov/sustainability/energy-challenge>

- Duke Energy Energy Efficiency Program:

<https://news.duke-energy.com/releases/duke-energy-indiana-brings-new-energy-efficiency-program-to-bloomington>

- Sustainable Bloomington Highlights: <https://bloomington.in.gov/sustainability/highlights>

- Solar Capacity of Schools:

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/29112017/solar-panels-school-science-education-clean-energy-rates-technology-stem>

- Energy Tiles:

<https://cbs4indy.com/2015/05/13/bloomington-high-school-students-learn-about-sustainable-energy/>

**Article** (NOTE: this is a rough draft and will be edited to be published)

When it comes to Bloomington High School South (BHSS), one crippling shortcoming of our school is that, as is typical of most buildings in Indiana, we are far too dependent on coal powered energy. Not to mention, the coal plant in which we source this energy is based in Indianapolis, more than 60 miles away. This is one of BHSS' biggest contributions to the ongoing environmental crisis that everyone is painstakingly aware of; however, it does not have to be this way. Now, what can merely one high school realistically accomplish in fighting against climate change? The answer is: a lot! After all, climate change can only be reduced with the mass cooperation of humanity. New and innovative solutions that can help mitigate further climate change escalation have presented themselves to the public, and with technology progressing at an ever increasing rate, these creative solutions that previously seemed infeasible can, and have been, implemented in public institutions such as our very own school.

You may or may not already know what I am referencing—the green tiles on the raised platform that generate energy with each step. The tiles, manufactured by Pave Gen, are energy efficient and harnesses the kinetic power created by walking on them to generate energy. They are also the only tiles of their kind in any American public institution! That's right—BHSS has a renewable energy source that no other public institution has in the entire nation. Additionally, the \$24,000 that bought it came from a student-applied grant. This only goes to show how much potential we have as a student body to invoke change on a school-wide level. Students often doubt their ability to make an impact, but with outside support from organizations and companies, change is very much plausible.

An example of support students could potentially obtain in an effort to increase the use of clean energy in BHSS is The Monroe County Energy Challenge (MCEC). MCEC is an effort in

our community to provide clean energy, and it has several partners: the City of Bloomington, Vectren Energy Foundation, Solar Indiana Renewable Energy Network (SIREN), Monroe County School Corporation, etc. Why is this an example of a good resource? Because of its partners—the City of Bloomington could potentially help fund an energy initiative, Vectren Energy Foundation offers grants, and SIREN is partnered with several solar energy contractors. Additionally, the City of Bloomington also launched Solarize Bloomington, an initiative to incentivize solar energy by providing group-buy discounts on solar power. To date, Solarize Bloomington has allowed 3,900 kW of solar capacity to be added to Bloomington’s homes and buildings. A school could easily be incorporated into this, as the typical solar capacity of a high school is only 165 kW. With such powerful supporters, we could certainly advocate for a cleaner energy program at BHSS –and actually have a chance of succeeding.

Although these are only hypothetical situations, they display the potential that a passionate, determined study body can have. A distant, seemingly unrealistic dream of a school that runs on clean energy may not be so far out of reach after all.