

Advancing Equity in Driving Climate Solutions

WHY DOES THIS MATTER: Black, Latino, Indigenous, and other communities of color, as well as low-income urban and rural students disproportionately feel the negative consequences of climate change — and these same communities are most impacted by existing education inequities. To advance equity and environmental justice, school boards can ensure that climate action prioritizes communities that are most impacted by climate change and ensure that students and families in those communities are at the center of decisions by districts and schools.

KEY POINTS

- Climate action should include students as partners. As the primary stakeholders in education and the future, students should be included as partners in decision making about climate action. They offer critical perspectives, and meaningfully including students can help them develop agency to advance solutions.
- Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and other communities of color, low-income communities, people with disabilities, and under-resourced urban and rural communities bear the greatest burdens from negative climate impacts, from greater exposure to pollution to greater vulnerability to extreme weather. To advance equity and environmental justice, climate action should prioritize communities that are most impacted by climate change and ensure that people in those communities are meaningfully included in decisions about climate actions and the implementation of climate solutions.
- Climate change exacerbates existing inequities in education. Due to inequities in education funding systems, schools and districts that serve primarily low-income students and students of color may face greater challenges accessing resources for sustainable infrastructure or other climate solutions. As districts take action on climate change, they should prioritize resources for schools in these communities to ensure that all students in the district can benefit from climate solutions and can access high quality career pathway programs.

SCHOOL BOARD EXAMPLE: To formalize and expand support for green initiatives in Milwaukee Public Schools, in March of 2020, the Milwaukee Board of School Directors adopted a [Climate Justice Resolution](#). Designed to bring attention to climate change and develop an action plan for the district, the resolution included the formation of the Climate Justice Committee consisting of students, teachers, and specialists.

