

# Climate Education in Schools

**WHY DOES THIS MATTER:** Teaching and learning about climate change, its causes, consequences, and solutions can help empower children and youth to lead a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future. School boards can help teachers engage students in teaching and learning about climate change, climate solutions, and sustainability across all grades and subject areas. School boards can also support career and technical education programs that prepare students for jobs in a clean economy.

## KEY POINTS

- Districts can help teachers incorporate climate change, climate solutions, and sustainability into their existing curricula across grades and subject areas
  - As climate change continues, students who have an understanding of its causes and what they can do to advance climate solutions will be better prepared for the future.
  - Cross-curricular teaching and learning about climate change and solutions empower students to lead a sustainable future. And participating in shaping projects and implementing solutions is an antidote to student anxiety about climate change.
  - Districts can support teachers by providing professional development, curricular materials, and example lesson plans.
- As we transition to a clean energy economy, today's students will need to be prepared to address climate change in their careers. Schools must aid in this transition.
  - Jobs in clean energy industries are some of the fastest growing in the country. Districts can ensure that career and technical education (CTE) programs help students benefit from the increasing demand for high-skill, high-wage jobs in the clean economy.
  - Climate change is impacting every sector, including agriculture, water treatment, food production, manufacturing, hospitality and tourism, marketing, energy, healthcare, supply-chain management, finance, architecture, and transportation. Integrating sustainability into all CTE curricula can help to prepare students to succeed in any career path they choose.

**SCHOOL BOARD EXAMPLE:** In 2022, the Portland Public Schools Board adopted a robust [Climate Crisis Response, Climate Justice, and Sustainable Practices Policy](#). The policy tasks the district with achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2040 and instructs the district to develop a curriculum that teaches students about the root causes of climate change, empowers students to focus on climate solutions, and supports emotional resilience for youth who are inheriting a future fundamentally shaped by climate change.

