

Teaching for Tomorrow: How States Are Leading the Way on Climate Education

May 20, 2025

- Link to the recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efLudDOiCZ8>
- eePRO post: <https://eepro.naaee.org/learning/teaching-tomorrow-how-states-are-leading-way-climate-education>

Panelists:

- **Teddy Lyman**, Climate Education Specialist, Office of Innovation, Maine Department of Education, theodore.lyman@maine.gov
- **Sarah Sterling**, Senior Climate Change Education Advisor, Office of Climate Change Education, New Jersey Department of Education, Sarah.Sterling@doe.nj.gov
- **Dr. Roni Jones**, Director of Curriculum, Ten Strands, rjones@tenstrands.org

Moderator:

Alexia Leclercq, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Start:Empowerment

Highlights of the chat transcript:

Welcome!

- NAAEE Staff: Welcome everyone! Please share your name, organization, and where you're joining us from!
- Sheryl Baumann: Trumbull Nature & Arts Center, Trumbull, CT
- Brock Adler: Brock Adler, Boston, MA
- Grace Sanvictores: Hello from Jersey City, New Jersey!
- Laurel Bates: Laurel Bates, Organization: Oregon Metro, joining from Portland, OR
- JAMEE ALSTON: Jamee Alston (PGCPS): Prince George's County Public Schools, Upper Marlboro MD
- Misty Hertzog: Huntsville Botanical Garden in Huntsville, Alabama
- Becky Stromfeld: Becky Stromfeld, Prospect Park Zoo, Brooklyn, NY
- Angela Whittaker: Angela Whittaker from The Institute for Humane Education Virginia US
- Patrick Chandler: Patrick Chandler, CIRES, Boulder CO
- Areej Riaz: Areej Riaz, For Our Kids. I'm joining from Ontario, Canada
- David Beard: Seattle, WA 🌲
- Samantha Samantha: Samantha Willis, Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust
- Rachel Holbert: Rachel Holbert, Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, joining from Narragansett & Wampanoag homelands
- Sarah Hoog: Sarah Hoog, Central State University, Ohio
- Jazmin Albarran: Jazmin Albarran, Seed Your Future, Alexandria, Virginia

- Ana Leirner: Ana Leirner, Project Learning Tree, joining from Washington DC today
- Melanie Costello: Melanie Costello from NIU Lorado Taft Field Campus in Oregon, IL
- Tom Ackerman: Tom Ackerman, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Annapolis, MD
- Sionainne O'Neill: Sionainne O'Neill, Antioch GSLC, in Bellingham, WA
- Chenille Williams: Chenille Williams from the SC Energy Office in Columbia, SC
- Scott Lewis: Scott Lewis, Florida Climate Educators Network, Pembroke Pines, FL
- Kate Nagle (she/her) PLT-SFI: Kate Nagle, project learning tree, joining from silver spring, Md
- Tanya Barnes: Tanya Barnes Va Beach, Va
- Laura Purutyan: Laura Purutyan, McAuliffe Center for Integrated Science Learning, Framingham State University, MA
- Allan Feldman: Allan Feldman, University of South Florida
- Yolanda Mitchell: Yolanda Mitchell, EENC, North Carolina
- Brittany Gutermuth: Brittany Gutermuth, Mass Audubon, Western Mass
- Jen Kretser: Jen Kretser, The Wild Center – northern NYS, Haudenosaunee lands
- Benjamin Charles: Ben Charles, SubjectToClimate, Los Angeles CA
- Billy Spitzer: Billy Spitzer, Hitchcock Center for the Environment, Amherst, Mass.
- Mary Sellars: Mary Sellars, Wild Classroom WWF joining from the Finger Lakes area in NY
- Esther Cowles: Esther Cowles, Fernwood Consulting, Barre VT
- Dennis Nolasco: Dennis Nolasco, [EARTHDAY.ORG](https://www.earthday.org), Washington DC
- Carla Herran: Carla Herran, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Portland, OR
- Peter Mecca: Peter Mecca, Adjunct Prof. of Biology @ UMGC, Science Education Consultant
- Jennifer Feller: Jennifer Feller, she/her, Mass Audubon, Massachusetts
- Alison Heimowitz: Alison Heimowitz, Metro, Portland, Oregon
- Carrie Albright, NAAEE Staff: Hi everyone! I'm Carrie (Bloomington, IN) and I'm happy to help if you need any tech support during today's eeWEBINAR.
- Don Haas: Don Haas, The Museum of the Earth and Center for Climate Change Education at PRI, Ithaca & Buffalo NY
- Joan Haley: Joan Haley, Education for Climate Resilience, the Institute for Sustainable Schools at Shelburne Farms, and the NAAEE Affiliate Vermont Education and Environment Network
- Christina Kwauk: Christina Kwauk, Unbounded Associates, based in the Washington DC metro area
- Carrie Albright, NAAEE Staff: Great to have so many folks joining us! Please share your name, organization, and where you're joining from!
- kier blake: kier blake, co-founder alongside panelist, Alexia Leclercq, at Start:Empowerment and working on climate education policy at Next100 😊

- Heather Segale: Heather Segale, UC Davis Tahoe Science Center, Lake Tahoe, California/Nevada
- Bryce Coon: Bryce Coon – Director of Education, EARTHDAY.ORG
- Ashleigh Fraley: Ashleigh Fraley – New York State Education Dept
- Sophia Donforth: Sophia Donforth – Vermont and New Hampshire Energy Education Program
- Thomas Hurtubise: Tom Hurtubise, Curator of Education, Queens Zoo New York
- Lindsay Zilly: Hi there! I'm Lindsay, Director of School Programs with Take Action Global (TAG) www.takeactionglobal.org
- Daniel Kirsch: Danny Kirsch, Coordinator of Professional Development for Educators, Wildlife Conservation Society, NYC
- Debra Veeder: Deb Veeder, Adopt-A-Stream Director & Chairman MS Environmental Education Alliance
- Estrella Risinger: Hi everyone! I'm Estrella from the Association for Environmental & Outdoor Education (AEOE) in California, joining from Ohlone land
- Madeleine Gefke: Madeleine Gefke, Portland parks & rec, Oregon
- C.J. Wilson: C.J. Wilson, Adjunct Conservation Educator at the Prospect Park Zoo, part of Wildlife Conservation Society. In Brooklyn, NY.
- Preethi Mony: Preethi Mony, NAAEE from Ohio

Resources Shared

Organizations and Agencies supporting Climate Education (mentioned during the panel discussion – there are many more!)

- Coalition for Climate Education Policy: <https://naaee.org/programs/coalition>
- Washington state's Clime Time: <https://www.climetime.org/>
- Start:Empowerment provides Free Environmental Justice Lessons: <https://www.start-empowerment.org/curriculumsuite>
- Ten Strands: <https://tenstrands.org/>
- The Maine Climate Education page offers educational information, resources, PD, data sets, and more: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/innovation/climateeducation>
- The New Jersey Climate Change Education site can be found at <https://www.nj.gov/education/climate/index.shtml>.
 - o Find out more about the NJ Climate Change Learning Collaboratives at <https://www.nj.gov/education/climate/collaboratives/>
- National Science Education Leadership Association: <https://www.nsela.org/>
- UndauntedK12: <https://www.undauntedk12.org/>
- The Climate Resilient Schools Coalition in Massachusetts: <https://www.climate resilient schoolsma.org/>
- SubjectToClimate provides Free Climate Resources & Lesson Plans: <https://subjecttoclimate.org/>

- The Climate and Resilience Education Task Force:
<https://www.cretf.org/>
- Climate Generation: <https://climategen.org/summer-institute/>

Foundational Documents to Support CA's Climate Education Policy Journey

- <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/pl/documents/envronliteracyblueprint.pdf>
- California's Environmental Principles and Concepts:
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/sc/ee/>
- The original Education and the Environment Initiative curriculum:
<https://www.californiaeei.org/curriculum/> supported the development of our newest curriculum, Seeds to Solutions: <https://seedstosolutions.org/>

Climate Mental Health Resources

- [SubjectToClimate](https://subjecttoclimate.org/)'s Mental Health Teacher Guide:
<https://subjecttoclimate.org/teacher-guides/mental-health-teacher-guide>
- Climate Mental Health Network: <https://www.climatementalhealth.net/>

Data and Evaluation

- Ten Strands has also “been working to support districts in understanding how to measure their progress toward sustainability and environmental literacy.” You can read more about the Ten Strands Data Initiative:
<https://tenstrands.org/work/data-initiative/>
- Maine DOE Climate Ed PD assessment:
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Climate%20Education%20-%20Phase%201%20assessment%20results%20-%2011.25.2024.pdf>

Panel Discussion, Questions, and Comments

- Sarah Bodor, NAAEE: Happy World Bee Day to all who celebrate! ❤️
- Megan Fink (she/her) NAAEE: 🐝🍯👏
- Don Haas: Happy Bee Day! Check out our online Bee exhibit!
<https://www.museumoftheearth.org/bees>
- Jennifer Feller: I'm very curious how panelists are coaching teachers who must integrate into existing curricula, rather than adding new units.
- Kate Nagle (she/her) PLT-SFI: +1
- Scott Lewis: So the three states represented (Maine, NJ, & CA) are forward thinking on climate change and are clearly providing support for these efforts – what advice for folks in states (Florida for example, maybe Alexia can talk about Texas) where the state is sometimes opposed to climate change mitigation efforts – how can more Climate Education be supported in such states?
- Sarah Hoog: Is the curriculum accessible to those outside of CA?

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- o Megan Fink: Yes, Seeds to Solutions™ is a set of free, solutions-oriented instructional resources for grades K–12 on California environmental issues. <https://seedstosolutions.org/> Resources may need to be adapted to your local context, but they are freely available!
- Kier Blake: Question: What are some of the ways each of your states / your work in the states is shifting / evolving from its / their initial approaches to now? Has the federal context played a role in these shifts / evolutions? What have you found that might be helpful in more general contexts for state implementers to know / keep in mind?
 - o Dr. Roni Jones: Thank you for the question, Kier. We started our curriculum development 3 years ago and released our curriculum on March 30 of this year. Our funding required us to address both climate change and environmental justice so we had to work in those boundaries. We do think that the current context might impact the implementation and uptake of our curriculum but we are just now working through that. As for the right point, I think Sarah mentioned a multiple-pronged approach. We had foundational policy in the Blueprint and EP&Cs that supported the legislation that funded the curriculum. So I would advocate that you find the entry point that would work best in your state (maybe standards, or other initiatives) to tag onto.
- Christina Kwauk: It seems that the initial first step that enabled all the great work to happen across the three states was the guiding document/the blueprint/the standards, etc. that set things in motion, especially with regard to opening doors to resources, funding, and positions of support. Curious if the speakers could comment on how other states could identify their “right” policy entry point.
- Frank Niepold III: Building on Christina’s question, I would like to know what other policies are needed to increase learners in each of the states climate literacy. Clearly curriculum, teacher PD and organization supports are needed, but what other policies are needed?
- Judy Braus, NAAEE: Go, Frank!!!!
- Christina Kwauk: Go Frank!!!!
- Megan Fink (she/her) NAAEE: Let's hear it for the "weavers"!
- Sarah Bodor, NAAEE: 🙌
- Frank Niepold III: Thank you!!! Weaving always. It’s how systemic change happens.
- Laura Purutyan: Please share the organization Sarah Sterling just mentioned that's supporting across different states. Thank you
 - o Megan Fink (she/her) NAAEE: <https://www.nsela.org/>
- Megan Fink (she/her) NAAEE: <https://www.undauntedk12.org/>

- Jennifer Feller: For those who are interested, Mass Audubon is also collaborating with Undaunted K12 and Mothers Out Front on climate resilience policies in districts: <https://www.climate-resilient-schools.org/>
- Smadar Shemmesh: This question is directed to Sarah Sterling – How can a K–5 certified educator participate in the Climate Education Professional Development sessions offered in Hudson/Bergen County, NJ? I'm an environmental steward, a Master Gardener yet unable to participate in those sessions since I'm not employed by any of those districts' public schools.
 - Sarah Sterling: @Smadar, we should get you connected to the community-based organizations that are working with the CCLC in your region, which is Ramapo University: <https://climatecollaborative.ramapo.edu/>
- Don Haas: Could you comment on the growing gap between red and blue states in regards to climate change education?
 - Sarah Hoog: I would also love to hear on this
- Joan Haley: I'd love to hear if and how youth have been involved in these efforts.
 - Kristen Hengtgen: +1
- Sarah Sterling: @Joan, we've created student advisory boards at the CCLCs to help inform the services that they provide. The grants to schools also include advisory boards that have student representation. Additionally, the climate action projects that students create in that grant are student-driven, based upon their learning about local impacts.
 - Joan Haley: Thanks, Sarah. That's powerful.
- Sophia Donforth: Where has the funding come from for teacher stipends, all the time spent planning and reviewing curriculum, supporting teachers in implementing it? Is that part of an existing state education budget, or coming from somewhere else?
 - Sarah Sterling: @Sophia, in our case in NJ, it is a special funding allocation of state funds.
- Martha Meyer: Question from the Founder of the Blueberry Awards, the best climate and nature books for kids 3 –10+ www.epl.org/blueberry: Are quality books for kids about nature and climate needed for all of this new curriculum development?
- Jennifer Feller: I'm curious if any of the states have done evaluation of the implementation efforts, and how that process was done (and what the results have been so far)
- Dr. Roni Jones: We have also been working to support districts to understand how to measure their progress toward sustainability and environmental literacy. You can read more about the Ten Strands Data Initiative: <https://tenstrands.org/work/data-initiative/>
- Jennifer Feller: Thank you!

- Teddy Lyman: Maine DOE Climate Ed PD assessment:
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Climate%20Education%20-%20Phase%201%20assessment%20results%20-%2011.25.2024.pdf>
- Martha Meyer: Another question: is climate change anxiety mitigation or avoidance important in the curriculum development in your states?
- Dr. Roni Jones: Thanks for asking, Martha. We worked closely with the Climate Mental Health Network to ensure our materials provided support for teachers to include SEL strategies: <https://www.climatementalhealth.net/>
- Benjamin Charles: Here is a link to SubjectToClimate's Mental Health Teacher Guide!
<https://subjecttoclimate.org/teacher-guides/mental-health-teacher-guide>
- Dr. Roni Jones: +1 to ensuring that students have an opportunity to take action. All of our units conclude with students taking action in their own communities.
- Sarah Sterling: +1 Ours as well in NJ
- Martha Meyer: Within the Blueberry Award criteria, we feel that real climate change Information should start around 3rd grade and that love of nature should be the focus of K-2nd classes.

Closing

- Sarah Bodor, NAAEE: NAAEE and the Coalition for Climate Education Policy are interested in continuing this conversation, perhaps through a series of webinars or other virtual conversations. Please stay in touch with your ideas, resources, and consider joining the coalition if you haven't already! Thanks for begin here today and for the great questions and resource sharing!
- Sarah Bodor, NAAEE: sarah@naaee.org & megan@naaee.org
- Megan Fink (she/her) NAAEE: **Interested in joining the Coalition for Climate Education? You can get involved here:**
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1O27Od6tBDbK_VFmyA3SFVSjIDqThWxGfpXd_eLBkGKos/viewform?edit_requested=true
- Megan Fink (she/her) NAAEE: <https://naaee.org/programs/coalition>
- Peter Mecca: Fascinating and informative discussions. Thank you, panelists. Thanks to NAAEE for hosting this.
- Jennifer Feller: Thank you for organizing this webinar.
- Sionainne O'Neill: This has been brilliant, that you so much. In researching with Arts based methodologies around Environmental justice, I look forward to seeing more on this aspect as well.
- Sarah Sterling: Happy to continue to talk with any of you offline:
Sarah.Sterling@doe.nj.gov
- Yolanda Mitchell: Thank yall
- Grace Sanvictores: Besides place base, I think it's also important to meet the community where they're at, culturally. Thank you!

- Dr. Roni Jones: Feel free to reach out: rjones@tenstrands.org
- Judy Braus, NAAEE: Thanks to everyone who has joined and to our wonderful panelists and moderator. We need to support each other during these tough times. Thanks for all you do! And thanks to Sarah and Megan for leading our Coalition for Climate Education Policy!
- Teddy Lyman: Thank you all, my email is theodore.lyman@maine.gov. Would love to talk further
- Grace Sanvictores: Thank you for all you do.
- Sarah Hoog: Thank you all so much for your efforts in moving forward, as a young professional/adult it's terrifying to see all that needs to be done but comforting to hear that there's so much work being done.
- Dorothy Morrison: Thank you all. Great webinar.
- Heather Segale: Thank you all very much! A great conversation. So many great resources.
- Dr. Roni Jones: Thank you, everyone! We love sharing our work and welcome any questions about our journey and learnings.
- Carrie Albright, NAAEE Staff: Fantastic questions from today's participants and absolutely powerful exchange among our moderator and panelists. Thank you all for attending and please be in touch!