

# Poll: 74% of Americans Want Climate Change Taught in Schools, Despite Current Lack of Curriculum

Edited by **Leo Gallagher**

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Poll: Americans Overwhelmingly Want Climate Change Taught In Schools

- Many students express disappointment at not being taught about the climate crisis and environmental justice issues
- Three-quarters of Americans believe that the government should encourage schools to incorporate climate change into their curriculum
- Co-founder of Change Is Simple emphasizes the importance of educating children about the planet they will inherit
- The state of climate education across the country varies widely, with the author of the Boston Globe op-ed giving the nation a “D” grade

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When I was in high school, I had to memorize the entire taxonomic hierarchy of the American moose. But I never learned about greenhouse gases.

This never struck me as odd until I read a recent op-ed in The Boston Globe by Anita Soracco, a professor of physics and environmental science at Massachusetts’ Quinsigamond Community College. “Over the past 13 years,” she wrote, “my students have consistently expressed disappointment and dismay that they hadn’t previously been taught about the climate crisis or the many environmental justice issues that plague their communities as a result.”

## Importance of Climate Education

What's perhaps even more dismaying is that most Americans want climate education in schools. A recent Heatmap News poll found that three-quarters of Americans (74%) believe that the government should encourage schools to incorporate climate change into their curriculum, including over half of Republicans (59%) and 75% of Independents. A full third of Americans (33%) said they strongly support such a proposal. In a separate question, 62% of Americans called it "important" for schools to incorporate climate change education, a number that is roughly on par with how many agree with the scientific consensus that climate change is a result of human activity (68%).

## Challenges in Climate Education

But when it comes to the state of climate education across the country, it can be — forgive the pun — all over the map. I asked Soracco, the author of the Boston Globe op-ed, what letter grade she'd give the nation for its climate education programs and she cringed and answered "probably a D." While the Next Generation Science Standards — a framework adopted by 20 states so far and that covers a little over a third of all U.S. students — recommends teaching climate change in science classes beginning with grade five, "it's not very specific," Soracco went on. "And the standards are voluntary, and so even if we put them in the state standards, it can be very performative."