

UNDERSTANDING YOUR LOCAL CONTEXT



Coalition for Climate Education Policy
Advancing climate literacy for a just and sustainable future

HOW IS THIS WORKSHEET ORGANIZED?

In order to bring about change, it is important to understand the dynamics of change. Change theories are useful when thinking about bringing impactful initiatives to a community. The questions in this document are organized into four categories:

1. [Evaluating the Readiness for Change](#)
2. [Preparing, Planning, and Designing Change Initiatives](#)
3. [Managing Change](#)
4. [Transformative Change](#)

Like any worksheet, start from the top, and work your way through the questions. Let these questions guide you and orient your thinking. It will be helpful to read through all questions, although some may not serve your specific needs and circumstances.

1. EVALUATING THE READINESS FOR CHANGE

How ready is your state or local community to embrace climate education policies?

YOUR COMMUNITY

- What distinctive characteristics is your state or local community known for?
- What values are prominent among residents in your state/county/district?
 - How do these values align with education priorities?
- What is the main industry in your state or locality and who are the largest employers?
- What are the primary climate vulnerabilities in your area?
- How do public perceptions of these climate vulnerabilities align with policy priorities?
- How is climate change already affecting your community?
- Are there any ongoing climate mitigation and/or adaptation efforts?
- How will the largest employers in your area be impacted by climate change?

CLIMATE EDUCATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- What body sets education policy in your state/district?
- How are climate change, solutions, and sustainability integrated into existing curricula?
 - Are these topics taught across subjects and grade levels?
- Are there Career Technical Education (CTE) programs or standards in your area?
 - Do the CTE standards or content include “green and blue” content?
 - *Green*: relating to land management and use of resources
 - *Blue*: relating to the oceans and inland waters
- How is Teacher Professional Learning structured in your area?
 - What is the process for teacher certification in your area?
 - How does this process or structure fit into climate education?
- What challenges do you see in implementing climate education efforts?

2. PREPARING, PLANNING, AND DESIGNING CHANGE INITIATIVES

Now as you are getting ready to design your climate education policy initiative campaign, here are some helpful questions to think through.

THE POLICY LANDSCAPE IN YOUR STATE

Policy Process

- What channels are available for advocating for policy changes within your state?
- Does funding for education in your state mostly rely on local authorities (districts) or state authorities?

Stakeholders and Constituents

- Who participates in the design of climate education policies?
- Who is responsible for implementing climate education policies?
- Are there legislative champions already working on a policy related to climate education, conservation, climate resilience, or sustainable economic growth?
 - If not, can one be identified and recruited?
- Is there a state contact responsible for climate education?
- How influential is your state Department of Education in whether and how climate education is taught in schools?
- Are higher education programs in your area involved in climate change or climate education initiatives?

Current Policies

- Can you identify leading examples of climate education policy within your state?
- Is there an ongoing legislative initiative for climate education? Or one where a climate education component could be integrated?

2. PREPARING, PLANNING, AND DESIGNING CHANGE INITIATIVES

Now as you are getting ready to design a climate education policy initiative campaign, here are some helpful questions to think through.

THE POLICY LANDSCAPE IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT OR COUNTY

Policy Process

- What channels are available for advocating for policy changes within your county or school district?

Stakeholders and Constituents

- Who participates in the design of climate education policies?
- Who is responsible for implementing climate education policies?
- Are there local champions for climate education?
 - If not, can one be identified and recruited?
- Who comprises your school board?
- Are higher education programs in your area involved in climate change or climate education initiatives?

Policy Examples

- Can you identify leading examples of climate education policy within your county/district?
- Does your district or school board have existing resolutions about climate change education?
 - If so, how are they integrated into the curriculum?
- Does your district have environmental literacy or sustainability plans in place?
 - Do these have climate components?

3. MANAGING CHANGE

How can you manage and plan for this to be an effective climate education policy initiative?

- How can you engage a diverse range of stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, parents and Indigenous communities) in climate education policy?
- How are diversity of knowledge, practices, and participants ensured in education policy? (i.e. incorporation of multicultural content and themes.)
- How are diverse [pedagogical \(teaching\) models](#) encouraged? (i.e. the constructivist approach, the collaborative approach, the reflective approach, the integrative approach, and the inquiry-based approach.)

4. TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

Now it is time to make sure the climate education policy initiative is disruptive and long-lasting.

- How can climate education help address a broad range of interrelated justice issues (race, gender identity, culture, etc.)?
- How can your state's environmental literacy initiatives support new efforts towards holistic climate education?
- How can your educational goals align with the benefits of climate education? (i.e. STEM literacy, socio-emotional learning)
- How can climate change topics be integrated into state standards in all subjects and grade levels?
- Does your state curriculum framework reference climate change education?