

May 1st, 2021

Newton School Committee
100 Walnut Street
Newton, MA 02460

Re: Please make Climate Education a district-wide goal

Dear School Committee Members, Superintendent Fleishman, Mayor Fuller,

"Education is an essential element of the global response to climate change. It helps young people understand and address the impact of global warming, encourages changes in their attitudes and behaviour and helps them adapt to climate change-related trends." - [Unesco](#)

The city of Newton has taken an important stance in the fight to stop climate change by committing in 2020 to an ambitious Climate Action Plan (CAP), which calls for substantive decreases in greenhouse gas emissions in the next few years. In a first step toward rapid implementation of the CAP, the City hired an energy coach to help residents adopt cleaner and more sustainable domestic and transportation practices in their personal lives. **An important next step is to include the Newton Public Schools in this endeavor.**

With appropriate resources, district-wide professional development and support, teachers can provide students with a framework in which to begin their practice of a sustainable, climate-protecting lifestyle and ability to engage in climate action as needed. **If Climate Education is a district goal, more of our citizenry will be prepared to address the climate crisis and help the city meet the CAP goals.**

Climate education is not solely a topic to be addressed by science teachers. The recent long overdue high-profile BLM and other social justice movements has increased awareness of the inequitable impact of climate degradation in different communities. As Ibram X. Kendi says in his book discussed in Newton last summer, *How to Be an Antiracist*, "do-nothing climate policy is racist policy." The laudable focus of Newton Public Schools on anti-racism, social equity, human dignity, and social action can easily be viewed through a lens of climate education.

In 2019, the School Committee supported the inclusion of Sustainability as a district-wide goal and thanks to it NPS now has an active Schools Sustainability Working Group, a new Director of Sustainability and a focus on sustainable facilities and transportation. **It is time to be explicit about the inclusion of Climate Education in the district-wide goals.**

As the city implements its Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the school district works to improve school facilities, **we urge the School Committee to consider the benefits of teaching the entire school community why and how to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions** and meet the city's goal



of a carbon-neutral Newton by 2050. With the CAP, the City seeks to “equip our residents and businesses with the tools and support needed to make climate-conscious choices that reduce the community’s GHG emissions while also leading by example.” This engagement and education of Newton’s citizens will be even more effective if the schools provided resources and included all of our teachers and students in the discussion. In doing so, we will be grooming the future role models and leaders of the change that will sustain the lives of our younger citizens.

Please support the goals of Newton’s CAP and the needs of the next generation by offering instructional opportunities for students and staff aiming to infuse more climate education into existing curricula.

Please contact us with further questions at schoolconnections@greennewton.org.

Sincerely,

Joana Canedo and Deanna Hoffman
Green Newton School Connections
schools.greennewton.org

cc: School Committee members

cc: Liam Hurley, Stephanie Gilman, Eva Thompson, Toby N. Romer, Ann Berwick

cc: Marcia Cooper, Sunwoo Kahng