

THE CLIMATE PEDAGOGY PROJECT



Teacher gathering at Earthship Aug 2024

- *What do our young people need to know and understand about climate change?*
- *How are teachers currently teaching about climate change in Tompkins County schools?*
- *How are sustainability and climate change being introduced in subjects other than science?*
- *What kinds of support do K-12 teachers want or need to adequately address climate change?*

These questions are the core of a local effort to support the teaching of climate change in our County schools. The Einhorn Center for Community Engagement at Cornell University has awarded DCI's Building Bridges Initiative a multi-year grant to research the teaching of climate change in Tompkins County and propose initiatives to support climate learning throughout the County.

The project's first step is to interview teachers to gauge their interest and what they are currently teaching. We are interviewing K-12 teachers in all subject areas throughout the County.

There are many teachers, throughout the seven school districts in our county, who are already teaching about climate – in science classes, as extra-curricular projects like Sustainability Clubs, and as electives in high schools. Most of these teachers are science teachers, but we are also finding Social Studies, English, Arts, and Tech teachers who are addressing some aspect of climate teaching.

Teachers are already over-loaded with all they are expected to do, so adding climate change to their to-do list is a big ask. To make it easier, we are looking at the NYS Learning Standards to see where climate information can satisfy the requirements that the teachers already have to meet.

Another way we are supporting teachers to address climate issues is by matching climate content to existing curricula, such as: where our energy comes from; how fossil fuels are affecting our atmosphere; literature and poetry that addresses these issues; biographies of people who have done this work; graphs, charts and data about greenhouse gas emissions, the amount of energy a home uses, where NYS gets its electricity, and more.

We will also offer teachers the opportunity to join a network of educators interested in teaching about climate, so they may share ideas, questions, and resources with other Teachers and connect to local organizations that have resources to offer.

Interested or curious teachers can reach out to Anne Rhodes at aer86@cornell.edu for more information, curricular activities, and resources.