



Youth are Climate Leaders

Teacher Background Document

Introduction

In Vernon, and all around the world, the climate is changing. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. The IPCC tells us that we have less than twelve years to cut our greenhouse gas emissions by 45% to stay at a 1.5 degree temperature increase. Students are concerned. Students and youth have a critical stake in the future, their visions of the future and ideas of how to get there can help to shape the plan for the future of Vernon.

The City of Vernon is also concerned about climate change and is undertaking a Climate Action Plan Process. As a part of this process the City has created a Climate Action Advisory Committee. The Committee is leading a conversation about how Vernon reduces our contributions to Climate change and prepares for the unavoidable impacts of Climate change.

As part of the community engagement in the process the Committee has organized “Students are Climate Leaders”, an opportunity for students of all grades to be heard, to describe their visions of and solutions for the future. The visions will be showcased on World Environment Day, June 5, 2019. All students entering will be recognized and their work may appear in future activities of the committee and be featured in the Climate Action Plan.

This is just the start of working with students, the Committee will be reaching back out in the fall to include students in more detailed Climate Action Planning.

Objectives

- Encourage teachers and students to engage in and discuss climate change.
- Motivate students to think critically and creatively about the ways in which they can have a positive impact on our communities.
- Empower and reassure students that they have a voice and the capacity to be leaders and agents of change.

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- Demonstrate to the community how important climate change is to the youth.
 - Generate material to share with the community and include in the City's Climate Action Plan.

Process

1. Introduce the opportunity

The Committee is available if you would like one of us to come in and host a kick off meeting. If you are already working on something in class, this is a great opportunity to celebrate it! This can fit with your existing curriculum.

The poster provided will give you all the information that you need to get the students started. If you have any questions please email them to sustainability@vernon.ca.

At the end of this document are some resources to help start the conversation.

2. Get ready for conversations

Many students will have lots of feelings about the changing climate. It's scary, so many people don't want to talk about it. However, giving the students an opportunity to talk about climate change and their ideas will be an important beginning of the chosen activity. They may need lots of time.

You might start this part of the activity by asking the students what they love about living in this part of the Okanagan. It might also be helpful to find out what they already know or think they know about climate change. Following this it might be helpful to share some information from the sources provided below. From there the discussion can move into how the changing climate affects the things they value. At this point, encourage students to find a way to express their hopes (or concerns) for the future on their own or as part of a group.

3. Brainstorm ideas:

These ideas are just to get them started!! Encourage them to do what they are drawn to!

1. Write a story or a poem from the point of view of a student living in 2030 after we have been successful in stabilizing the climate. (it might be written from the unsuccessful point of view as well).
 2. Write an article for the 2030 news media describing a sports or other event that describes environmental conditions as part of the article.
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3. Paint or draw a picture showing some aspect of Vernon after a successful (or not) transition to a stable climate.
 4. Write a letter to the editor with your thoughts on the changing climate.
 5. Write a skit that expresses your hopes for the future and make a video of it.
 6. Interview Vernon students who have participated in the International Student Climate Strike movement and record it in print or audio. (We can provide contacts)
 7. Plant an indigenous species tree(s) as a means of sequestering carbon. Record the event in written word, audio, video or drawn images. Audio and video should be edited to two minutes or less.
 8. Make a poster identifying the local effects of climate change and describing the actions that governments and individuals can take.
 9. Explore the active transportation (bikes, walking, skate boards etc) network in Vernon and make a poster or interview using active transportation
 10. Compose a song about climate change and record it.
 11. View the film “Beyond Climate” narrated by David Suzuki and after a discussion write a review of the film. Some prompts for the discussion are:
 - Why would Ian Mauro, the director of the film, title the movie Beyond Climate?
 - The film states that B.C. is a hotspot to see and experience how global warming is affecting local ecosystems and communities. What are some of the changes that you have seen in the Okanagan over your lifetime?
 - The film uses Vancouver as an example of a “green city.” What steps can our communities in the Okanagan take to become more “green?”
 - The film calls climate change “the paramount issue of our time”, do you agree or disagree? Tell us why.
 - What can you do to engage your school, family or neighbourhood to participate in solutions to the challenges we are facing?

A trailer for the film can be viewed at <https://www.beyondclimate.ca/>

12. Any other idea that inspires you!

4. Set them loose!

Make sure they are aware of the deadline and how to submit their project. See the attached poster for details.

5. Come to the celebration!

The viewing of the projects will be kicking off at 4pm on June 5, 2019 at the Village Green Centre. Please encourage the students to bring friends and family to the event. Each student or class will be recognized (details still under development).





Resources

Students Taking Action

Greta Thunberg:

Addressing UK MPs: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/23/greta-thunberg-full-speech-to-mps-you-did-not-act-in-time>

World Economic Forum - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7dVF9xylaw>

Ted Talk -

https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate?language=en

Isra Hirsi, a 16 year old muslim student talks about climate action: <https://grist.org/article/the-climate-movement-needs-more-people-like-me/>

A Guardian article about the student climate strike: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJ_QkjieLmw

Lessons

Teaching Climate Change to Children: <http://teachclimatechange.org/teaching-climate-change-to-children/>

A NASA website for teaching children about climate change: <https://climatekids.nasa.gov/>

Kids Against Climate Change: <https://kidsagainstclimatechange.com/>

General Information

Johan Rockstrom at the World Economic Forum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9ETiSaxyfk>

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Website: <https://www.ipcc.ch/>

Climate Change 101 from the Columbia Basin Trust: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECJtF7CfYcA>

