
**New Haven Climate Movement and Climate
Health Education Project**

New Haven Leon Sister City Project

608 Whitney Ave.
New Haven, CT 06511



Climate Justice School Initiative

Summer 2020

OVERVIEW

The 2019 City of New Haven's Climate Emergency Resolution recognizes the urgent need to address the climate change threat to New Haven. The New Haven Board of Education has an opportunity to play an important role in educating and mobilizing students, teachers and families to take action by initiating the Climate Justice Schools program.

The Climate Justice School program supports school efforts to incorporate climate change and climate justice education, climate solutions focused community service hours, project-based learning, a Climate Week in April, and Meatless Mondays in their programming.

The benefits of Climate Justice Schools (CJS's) reach far beyond the classroom and out into the greater community, and include:

- Climate education that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and has local benefits such as improved public health through transportation, food, and energy education and changes.
- In-school climate solutions projects that empower students through giving them leadership opportunities to improve their community, work with teachers to engage in difficult problems, and formulate solutions.
- Classroom activities that explore climate justice and equity issues at a time when many communities are confronting racial injustice.
- Prepares students for a changing future in which there will be a massive shift to clean energy technologies, and significant investment in climate resiliency.
- Opportunities for students to tap into an issue they are passionate about and become educated on this issue, which will open doors for future career choices.

Adaptation of the Climate Justice Schools proposal would make New Haven one of the nation's leaders in climate education, and thus set an example for other communities that must respond to the climate crisis. There have been a number of polls that show that there is strong public support for schools to offer climate education - [4 in 5 support it in this poll](#).

GOALS

1. Schools will educate students across grade levels about climate science, climate change, climate health, and climate justice, as well as the imminent threat it poses to people and landscapes. This will prepare students to handle this crisis.
2. Schools will set a positive example for students by educating them on the realities of climate change as well as getting them involved in taking measures to combat climate change. Schools will involve students in creating solutions through project-based learning.
3. CJS's will invite students to be in leadership roles surrounding climate change and climate justice in their schools/communities.
4. Schools will inspire students to urge their families to take action in their own homes.
5. Schools will prioritize projects that have co-benefits to the environment and surrounding communities, especially low income communities.
6. New Haven Public Schools will be among the first to help create the next generation of climate leaders.

SPECIFICATIONS

All schools in New Haven are strongly encouraged to become Climate Justice Schools in order to respond to the declared Climate Emergency. Climate Justice Schools prepare students for their future by informing them about the climate crisis, climate change, climate health, and climate justice. The CJS's program will start with just five interested high schools as of the fall of 2020, and will later expand to include all high schools and middle schools in New Haven.

In order for New Haven schools to become Climate Justice Schools, the New Haven Board of Education must encourage all participating schools to do all of the following:

- Implement 30 hours of climate change education per grade level per year in all area middle and high schools. This must be achieved across multiple subjects in each grade level (such as Science, English, and Social Studies) in order for students to have a well-rounded climate education. Additionally, seven of these hours may be fulfilled through school-wide activities such as School-Wide Project days and Climate Week activities.

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- Implement project-based learning surrounding solutions to climate change with the help of student interns. For example, year one's project could focus on reducing greenhouse gases in school transportation through walking, biking, and carpooling to school.
 - Introduce "Meatless Mondays" in their cafeterias using the [Meatless Monday K-12 Foodservice Program Guide](#)*
 - Require that 10% of the community service hours required for students to graduate be fulfilled through climate change/sustainability-related community service opportunities. For schools that do not require community service, they should now require 5 hours of climate change/sustainability-related community service per student.
 - Phase out single-use plastics in the cafeteria.
 - Host a Climate Week every April in celebration of Earth Day. This week can include assemblies, activities, field trips, and assignments to get students excited about climate change and activism. This week must involve families in some way, such as: having students take home energy audits to do with their parents, family trivia, hosting a Climate Fair, and/or having students interview their parents about their knowledge of climate change.
 - Hire two student interns that work closely with a teacher on climate change and justice efforts.

The Board of Education must also:

- Give each participating school 3,000 dollars for teacher stipends and student intern stipends.
- Require school administrations to support student and faculty led climate initiatives.

MILESTONES

1. The Board of Education commits to the process of making all New Haven Public Schools Climate Justice Schools.
2. As soon as the Board of Education passes this initiative, The Board of Education will implement a CJS's pilot program. The Board of Education chooses five interested New Haven High Schools to begin implementing the Climate Justice School program at the start of the fall of 2020.
3. By the fall of 2021, all five New Haven schools will meet all specifications for Climate Justice Schools.
4. Making necessary adjustments in regards to the five pilot schools, all New Haven Area schools will be strongly encouraged to declare themselves Climate Justice Schools and meet the Climate Justice School specifications by the fall of 2023.