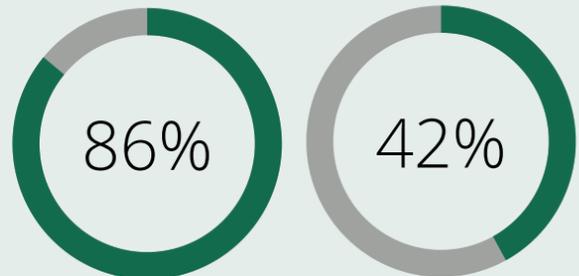


A LOOK INTO THE NUMBERS

Diving into the obstacles teachers face regarding the topic of climate change



A poll taken in early 2019 by National Public Radio (NPR) and Ipsos (a global market research company) revealed that eight out of ten parents in the United States support the idea of climate change being taught in schools.



A similar poll by NPR and Ipsos found that 86% of teachers agree that climate change should be taught, but that only 42% of teachers across the nation regularly teach about climate change in their classrooms. This disconnect was also seen within parents as only 45% of parents actively discuss climate change with their children.



The poll also exposed that 90% of Democrats and 66% of Republicans agreed that climate change should be taught in schools.

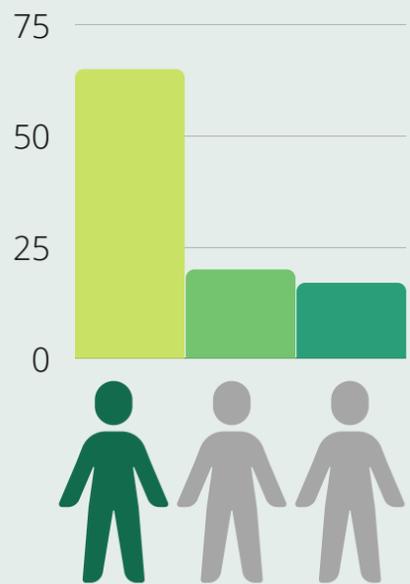


A STORY FROM COLORADO

Anya Kamenetz, the reporter documenting the story that these NPR and Ipsos polls came from had the chance to interview a few parents for her article. One of the individuals interviewed, Laine Fabijanic, happened to be a mother of three daughters and a resident of Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Fabijanic explained that she felt like climate change had a dramatic impact on her state and that she thought it was a topic that her children should learn about in schools. Even so, Laine Fabijanic also found that she had never had a conversation with her children about climate change. She confessed that it never seemed to come up in any of their daily conversations.

WHY CLIMATE CHANGE IS NOT BEING TAUGHT

Despite the overall agreement from parents and teachers that climate change should be a topic covered in schools, the reality is that this topic is largely ignored within many schools across United States. While there may be agreement about teaching the subject, there are still a variety of variables that prevent teachers from being able to do so. In another poll taken by NPR and Ipsos, it was discovered that teachers do not teach about climate change because (1) 65% of them feel like it does not relate to the subject(s) they teach, (2) 20% of them feel like their students are too young to be learning about the topic, and (3) 17% of them feel like they do not know enough about the topic or feel like they do not have the materials necessary to accurately teach about the topic. In addition to these variables, climate change is a subject that is often forgotten when emphasis is placed on mastering other disciplines. Finally, almost one out of every three teachers feel like they would face parent push back if they discussed climate change within their classrooms.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

While this issue may seem like one that is particularly daunting, there are many ways in which teachers can work around the factors that are preventing them from teaching about climate change. The next page will take a look at a few different ways in which teachers within Colorado (and other states) are trying to approach this subject.



TO DIVE INTO THESE STATISTICS FURTHER VISIT THE LINK LISTED BELOW!

<https://www.npr.org/2019/04/22/714262267/most-teachers-dont-teach-climate-change-4-in-5-parents-wish-they-did>

New Approaches To Teaching About Climate Change

There are a number of ways in which teachers from Colorado and other states across the nation are trying to reinvent teaching about climate change in the classroom.

In Denver, Colorado...

At Steele Elementary School, Erin Royer teaches her fourth-grade and fifth-grade students about climate change through a problem-based learning style. Through student-led, independent research, Royer has seen her students tracing many problems in their world back to climate change through various cause-and-effect relationships.

In Telluride, Colorado...

Tucker Szymkowicz (director of experimental education and environmental science instructor of Telluride Mountain School) works alongside Hilary Cooper (a local environmental advocate) to get students out of the classroom and into the diverse environment around them. By connection students with professional ecologists and foresters, Szymkowicz and Cooper can provide their students with access to in-depth field trips into their local climate. As a result of this, they allow their students to experience climate change first-hand and make their own conclusions about the subject.

In The Bronx of New York...

At Bronx Park Middle School, Rebecca Meyer, an eighth-grade teacher, has found a new way to educate her students about climate change. Since Meyer is an English language arts teacher, she has her students investigate climate change by conducting some initial research about scarcity and then reading *Not a Drop to Drink*, a climate-fiction novel written by Mindy McGinnis. Through this process, Meyer watches her students make connections between the novel and the world that they live in today. This process allows her students to explore climate change through their own research.

In Chapel Hill, North Carolina...

At McDougle Middle School, Debra Freeman teaches her students about climate change through a healthy food choices unit, which she has added to her family and consumer science curriculum. Her classes discuss the connection between overconsumption (of animal products) and global warming as well as how food waste affects climate change. Freeman hopes that her curriculum will allow her students to use their developing problem-solving skills to find new ways to approach solving the various issues associated with climate change.

An External Study Regarding Climate Change Instruction

An article released in August of 2020 by Laura Oleniacz, a frequently published writer for North Carolina State University's news department, brought to light a study that had been conducted regarding how students respond to climate change education. The study was originally conducted by three researchers from the University of Utah, North Carolina State University, and BCSC Science Learning (a non-profit organization that housed in Colorado Spring, Colorado) with the intent of discovering whether teaching students about the ways in which humans cause climate change would increase or decrease their acceptance of the reality of climate change overall. The study ultimately found that demonstrating how human actions cause climate change was linked to increased acceptance of the validity of climate change, but also found that there was another factor that was more important to consider. The researchers discovered that students' worldviews were more influential in dictating whether or not the students accepted or rejected the content in the climate change lesson. This discovery is vital to advancing how climate change is taught because it revealed how important it is to address various worldviews about climate change in conjunction to teaching about climate change. It is clear that climate change will only continue to be more accepted by students if opinions and values of students are discussed hand-in-hand with climate change.

<https://news.ncsu.edu/2020/08/lessons-for-educators-on-teaching-climate-change/>

<https://brightthemag.com/in-colorado-teaching-to-a-changing-climate-831b81a32358>

<https://www.npr.org/2019/04/22/714262267/most-teachers-dont-teach-climate-change-4-in-5-parents-wish-they-did>