

Petition to the BASD School Board

- Full Six Commitment Descriptions & Reasoning
Bethlehem Climate Justice Education Project (BCJEP)

THE SIX COMMITMENTS:

The Bethlehem Area School District should act immediately and urgently to do the following.

I. Immediately announce Support for Voluntary, TEACHER-driven CCE and SE adaptations to instruction

Adopting new curriculum content and classes (according to the current BASD "Program of Studies" process), is normally a long, 1.5 - 2+ year process - *if changes are supported by the school district.*

Until the remaining, below recommendations can be implemented, immediately announce support for significant, feasible, and voluntary, TEACHER-driven inclusion of CCE and SE to instruction in the 2024-25 school year .

(There are many qualified experts in the valley to help guide this, such as but not limited to Drs. Ben Felzer, Breena Holland, Alec Bodzin, and Kate Jackson (Lehigh U), Dr Anita Forrester (NCC), and Dr Kate Semmens (NNC), all from the science and higher education fields.)

II. IMMEDIATELY COMMIT TO RAPIDLY PLANNING TO adopt and implement comprehensive CC Education (CCE) and Sustainability Education (SE):

In spite of our State's historical failure to require any/appropriate CCE and SE, and to meet the urgency of the threat from Climate Change, EXPEDITE/rapidly speed up the ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION of CC Education (CCE) and Sustainability Education (SE) modifications to the district's curriculum, ie "for all students, at all levels" (*as written in the 2014 "BASD Climate and Sustainability Commitment"*), and across all disciplines/subjects.

FIVE STATES HAVE ALREADY PASSED LAWS REQUIRING CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION, including New Jersey (1st), Connecticut, California, New York, and Illinois.

(After 22 years since the last update to science standards, PA finally added one mention of Climate Change, in only Earth Science, and not to begin until the 2025/26 school year.)

III. Fulfill the 10 Year-old, 2014 "["BASD Climate and Sustainability Commitment"](#)

Recommit to *fulfilling* the District's ten-year-old commitment to planning a **Climate Change Education (CCE) and Sustainability Education (SE)** curriculum (and regularly communicating progress with the public).

And update the Commitment to represent new science and appropriate urgency.

IV. Restart and Empower a "District Sustainability Committee"

Restart the twice stopped (2015 and 2022) District Sustainability Committee, requiring frequent (ie, monthly) Committee meetings and empowering it to engage the school community, to advise and assist the District's CCE and SE efforts, and to keep the District community informed.

V. Add Environmental Science to the HS Science Sequence or (at minimum) Make it an Option to 10th Grade Chemistry and Physics

Environmental literacy is an urgent knowledge area for all citizens under the existential threat of Climate Change.

What other HS science course could be more important to the current and future survival of students, let alone their hopes to thrive in our Global community impacted by CC and other related impacts of CC?

Therefore, until a more appropriate HS course covering the Earth and Environmental Science of CC and Sustainability can be approved, make HS Environmental Science (HSES) a required course for HS graduation, *or at minimum, make HSES a prominent option to Chemistry and Physics) in the HS Programs of Studies for the second year course in the science sequence.*

VI. Fund a Consultant and Dedicated, District CCE/SE/EE Leadership Staff

Fund/hire a consultant immediately to guide transition of the district to rapidly including comprehensive CCE and SE. Hire PERMANENT district leadership staff to coordinate the District's implementation of Climate Change Education, Sustainability Education, and general Environmental Education, *including developing a Living Environmental Lab in District buildings and on school grounds.*

REASONING:

This petition asks you to share responsibility and lead in the preparation of our young people and the protection of our community and civilization ...

- DUE TO THE **EXISTENTIAL CLIMATE CHANGE (CC) CRISIS, AND**

- ***DUE TO THE LOSS OF SO MUCH TIME ALREADY IN THE URGENT EFFORT to mitigate/reduce the effects of Climate Change by meeting the IPCC's 2030 and 2050 Carbon Emission Reduction Targets,***

- DUE TO THE **UNEQUAL/UNJUST IMPACT ON IMPOVERSHED PEOPLE, PEOPLE OF COLOR, AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE** of Climate Change - *within and without the US*, AND

- DUE TO **THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION** IN COMBATTING CC (and any social challenge), AND

- DUE TO **OUR EDUCATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY** TO THE COMMUNITY, AND

- DUE TO **THE HISTORY OF PENNSYLVANIA NEGLECTING CCE*** in our educational standards (*worst in the country) - summarized and sourced in this [LV News article](#) (Bilinski, Jan 2024), AND

- DUE TO **THE LACK OF ANY BASD REQUIREMENTS** TO LEARN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE OR SUSTAINABILITY.