



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Climate Science Curriculum Staff

1. **Purpose:**

To provide guidance for integrating climate science into all K–12 classrooms across subject areas and grade levels, including creating resources for districts and schools that encourage interdisciplinary units focused on climate change.

2. **Description of services provided:**

The Climate Science Curriculum Integration Consultant at OSPI worked with all content areas to determine best practices for integrating climate science into all content areas, K–12. It was found that all content areas could effectively integrate climate science ideas into their current Washington state learning standards with support for purposeful planning to incorporate grade-appropriate climate science ideas and phenomena into their classroom instruction. To support this work OSPI created resources for teachers and professional learning communities to plan for climate integration and shared these through content experts at OSPI, Educational Service District contacts, and teacher organizations throughout the state. Also, in conjunction with ClimeTime, this position also sponsored the first annual Climate Education Summit in April 2023 in Seattle, which brought almost 200 interdisciplinary educators together to discuss climate across content areas and grade levels.

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:**

N/A

Beneficiaries in the 2022-23 School Year:

Number of School Districts:	75
Number of Schools:	130
Number of Students:	20,300
Number of Educators:	250
Other:	35

4. **Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?**

☒ No



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

5. **State funding history:**

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2023	\$200,000	\$163,890

6. **Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:**

Fiscal Year	Number of Districts
23	75

7. **Programmatic changes since inception (if any):**

This was the first year of this position and proviso.

8. **Program evaluation or evaluation of major findings:**

Integrating climate science into all K–12 classrooms, aligned with the Washington state learning standards, will take time and support for all school districts and educators to determine the best way to incorporate climate science content into instruction for their students and community. Teachers of all subject areas and grade levels need professional learning opportunities to increase their subject matter understanding of climate change and how climate change is impacting their local area. Teachers also need the time, resources, and support to modify their instruction to include grade-appropriate climate change ideas.

9. **Major challenges faced by the program:**

This state-level climate integration education position was the first of its kind in any state across the United States, meaning the position and scope of work were built from the ground up. This allowed OSPI to create its own model for interdisciplinary climate integration support, however, it took time to figure out how to support climate change across subject areas. Working with each subject area to build relationships between educators of that subject area and climate science was important to ensure each subject area's best instructional practices could best align with the climate integration tools created by OSPI.

While science educators have targeted professional learning around climate science through the ClimeTime program, non-science educators have not had as many opportunities to learn about how to integrate climate into their instruction. These limited opportunities for non-science teachers were both because non-science teachers did not self-identify themselves as educators who could attend ClimeTime workshops when workshops were available for all educators, and there was limited capacity of the ClimeTime network to provide professional learning to an interdisciplinary audience.



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

10. Future opportunities:

Providing climate science professional learning and supports to all content area educators should be a priority. Since Washington already has the ClimeTime network of grantees who have done major work in supporting science teachers in climate learning, expanding to all content areas will be less burdensome than in other states doing similar work that do not have this infrastructure already in place for such an expansion, provided funding is available to increase the capacity of the grantees and/or increase the number of grantees who are supported by ClimeTime.

There is also a need for school- and district-level administrators to learn about climate science and how interdisciplinary classroom instruction can look at different grade levels and situations. This would ensure administrators are able to better support teachers in integrating climate across the curriculum.

11. Statutory and/or budget language:

Within amounts provided in this subsection (1)(a), \$200,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 is provided solely for a climate science curriculum staff position within the office of the superintendent of public instruction and to integrate climate change content into the Washington state learning standards across subject areas and grade levels. The office shall develop materials and resources that accompany the updated learning standards that encourage school districts to develop interdisciplinary units focused on climate change that include authentic learning experiences, that integrate a range of perspectives, and that are action oriented.

12. Other relevant information:

Climate science connections and integration can be found in all current Washington state learning standards, even though the term “climate change” or “climate science” is not explicitly listed in the language of the standards. The causes, impacts, and solutions to climate change can be integrated into instruction across subject areas by what the districts and teachers choose to focus their curriculum around.

To reduce climate anxiety among students, it is suggested that teachers focus on local climate-related issues with their instruction. To support this best practice, it is suggested to give teachers the flexibility to integrate climate science and climate change into their current learning standards and give examples of connections in updated learning standards rather than simply adding the term “climate change” into standards across subjects. For example, educators in Yakima Valley might incorporate climate change content while talking about agriculture, while educators on the coast may incorporate climate change content while talking about ocean acidification and sea level rise. These two examples would both allow



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

climate integration, but instruction would more than likely build toward and use different learning standards.

13. **Schools/districts receiving assistance:**

[preliminaryfy23state-fundedprovisograntawardsupdated-42823.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

14. **Program Contact Information:**

Name:	Lori Henrickson
Title:	Climate Science Curriculum Integration Consultant
Phone:	564-999-0257
Email:	lori.henrickson@k12.wa.us