



## **Climate Change Education Found Lacking**

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How climate change is being taught to American middle- and high-school students is severely lacking, according to a recent nationwide survey.

The National Center for Science Education (NCSE), along with the Penn State University Survey Research Center, interviewed more than 1,500 teachers and found that "three out of five teachers were unaware of, or actively misinformed about, the near total scientific consensus on climate change."

In addition, said NCSE programs and policy director Josh Rosenau, "At least one-in-three teachers bring climate change denial into the classroom, claiming that many scientists believe climate change is not caused by humans.

"Worse, half of the surveyed teachers have allowed students to discuss the supposed 'controversy' over climate change without guiding students to the scientifically supported conclusion."

The survey also found that teachers who want to teach climate change have a hard time accessing available information.

"There are some great climate education resources out there," said NCSE's climate maven Minda Berbeco. "But many teachers don't have time to find and evaluate these materials."

### Opposing view

Those who are more skeptical of climate change did not think the survey was sophisticated enough to account for the nuances of climate change.

"The Penn State survey of earth science teachers simplistically labels teachers who do not teach an alarmist view as deniers," said Patrick Michaels, director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute, who has been called a skeptic.

"A more sophisticated survey would have recognized that there is a broad spectrum of warming in the scientific literature, from modest and possibly beneficial [the so-called 'lukewarm' synthesis] to large and disastrous," he said. "It is also true that there is no science behind the notion that there will be no detectable change in climate from increasing carbon dioxide, which is a true denier position."

#### Other findings

But not all of the NSCE survey results were deemed discouraging. For one, they said very few teachers are "pressured to avoid teaching about global warming and its causes."

Also, the survey found that teachers were interested in more training and professional development when it comes to climate change teaching.

"Teachers didn't create the polarized culture war around climate change," Rosenau said, "but they're the key to ending this battle."