

Locally developed curriculum on climate change is available

The Bethlehem Gadfly Environment September 22, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the environment* 

Touchstone Theatre — Festival UnBound 2020 — Sustainability Forum

*Gadfly will be publishing the student presentations from the Saturday, September 19 event. For instance, see **Eli Zemsky, “The devastating effect of food waste and what we can do about it.”** In the meantime, you can view the event at the link above.*

ref: **“Pennsylvania doesn’t teach about climate change”**

Paul,

I read your editorial this morning with interest. I have been teaching Social Studies in the Bethlehem Area SD for 27 years and was recognized in 2012 as Outstanding Teacher of K-12 Geography by the National Council for Geographic Education. Yes, school curricula need to address this issue . . . and we are!

I wish you could have been present last night at Touchstone Theater in Bethlehem, PA. Bill George has been working with Lehigh University’s Ed Gallagher and myself to engage our young students in the Speak Out for Sustainability of Bethlehem. Five Liberty HS students in my Government class (Check out my Twitter @pageonut) as well as a student from Freedom and a student from Moravian Academy were selected to read their essays that involved their ideas, plans, and community action for making Bethlehem a more sustainable community. Bill said the link for the program will be available on **touchstone.org** for people to view as it was livestreamed last evening.

Dennis Scholl who is now retired from the D & L Heritage Center worked with a teacher from Saucon Valley to prepare a curriculum that is an historical gem, not only for our local students, but also any student in the US who wants to learn more about how the Northeast, specifically PA, has changed over the years. I was the curriculum consultant for this project. It has taken over a year, and we were excited to get this curriculum piloted in local schools when the pandemic hit forcing prioritizing demands on teachers.

While one might think curricula on climate change belongs only in environmental classrooms, it can be integrated into all disciplines. A blend of environmental science with the social studies opens an incredible opportunity for our young people. This is one of the reasons I have engaged my students in Government class to DO actual government. When Ed Gallagher and Bill George started this Speak Out program last year, I jumped at the chance to get the work of my students into their selection process. I teach my students that life is not about just complaining. We need to take an active role in making improvements. I was thrilled that the Sustainability Committee chose 9 of my students to speak this year. I was disappointed that 3 of my young ladies were unable to participate in last evening's program, but other students had read their work for them and it worked out. I was inspired by the ideas of these young minds. They are fighting for a better community!

Please reach out to Dennis about this curriculum. Reaching educational institutions to let them know these curriculum materials are available is vital. Reach out to Bill regarding our event last night. Your platform could be an opportunity to educate many people in what IS happening. There are resources available to continue to educate and involve, not only our young people, but all of us for a more sustainable future.

Thank you for your time.

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