



Building Power Together: Coalition Strategies for Climate Education Policy

June 2, 2026

[Link to the recording](#)

[Link to eePRO Post](#)

Speakers

Dr. Deb L. Morrison | Lead Author for the IPCC AR7

Sarah Kirby | Co-Director/Co-Founder, Oregon Educators for Climate Education (OECE); Secondary STEM Specialist, Eugene 4J School District

Rachel Rosner | Program Manager, Seven Generations Ahead

Emily Fano | Director, National Wildlife Federation; Co-Founder, Climate & Resilience Education Task Force

Mary Seawell | CEO and Founder, Lyra

Resources

Jimena Cuenca: [Coalition for Climate Education Policy](#)

Jimena Cuenca: [The Climate Education Policy Toolkit](#)

Jimena Cuenca: [Sarah Kirby LinkedIn](#)

Jimena Cuenca: [Mary Seawell LinkedIn](#)

Jimena Cuenca: [Stories of impact and evidence of student demand for climate education in CO](#)

Jimena Cuenca: [Emily Fano LinkedIn](#); [Climate and Resilience Education Task Force](#)

Jimena Cuenca: [Rachel Rosner LinkedIn](#); IOF Youth – [Seven Generations Ahead](#); [IOF Youth Instagram](#)

Jimena Cuenca: [Deb Morrison Website](#)

Deb Morrison: [Deb Morrison LinkedIn](#); [STEM Teaching Tools Climate Learning](#)

Deb Morrison: [ClimeTime Website](#)

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: [Colorado Climate Literacy Diploma | North American Association for Environmental Education](#)

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: [Illinois Climate Change Education](#)

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: State Education Policies - [Oregon Public Schools PDF](#)



Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: If at first you don't succeed... [New York Statewide K-12 Climate Education Requirement](#)

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: [Youth v Gov | Netflix](#)

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: [IOF Youth – Seven Generations Ahead](#)

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: [IL Youth Justice Summit](#)

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: [Seal of Climate Literacy](#)

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: Also want to give a shout out to The Wild Center: [Youth Climate Program](#) and [Youth Climate Institute](#) as leaders and partners in this space.

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: Also want to shout out [Earth Force](#) and their Youth Adult Partnership model

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: [Other Side of the Hill](#)

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: [Illinois Climate Education Hub](#)

Highlights of the Chat Transcript

Introductions

Ann Strozyk: Hi Megan! Ann Strozyk from the Youth Climate Institute

Helen von den Steinen: Hi Everyone. Helen von den Steinen from Climate Education for Illinois

Lee Derby: Lee Derby, Youth Climate Institute, Howard County, Maryland

Amanda Karls: Amanda Karls, USC Upstate (Spartanburg, SC)

Ellen Prusinski: Ellen Prusinski from Centre College in Danville, KY

Alyssa McConkey: Alyssa McConkey with Earth Force; zooming in from Northern Colorado

Benjamin Charles: Ben from SubjectToClimate calling in from Los Angeles

Sarah Sterling: Hi all! Sarah Sterling from NJ Dept. of Education in northwest NJ.

Katie Nahrwold: Katie Nahrwold, SubjectToClimate, IL State Lead -outside of Chicago.

Laura Fuller: Laura Fuller (she/her) here, from EcoRise, based in Denver.

Paul Lachapelle: I'm a professor in Political Science at [Montana State University](#)

Debbie Millikan: Debbie Millikan- Climate Future Forum and Punahou School, Honolulu, Hawai'i. Aloha Everyone!

Laura Downey: Laura from KS Assn for Conservation and Environmental Education, Manhattan, KS



Advancing climate literacy for a just and sustainable future

Joan Haley: Joan Haley - Climate Education Collaborative and the Equitable Climate Action Partnership

Abigail Brown: Abigail Brown, Postdoc in Life Sciences Communication at UW-Madison

Jennifer Mutch: Hi everyone, I am Jenn Mutch, and am in San José, Calif. at the Santa Clara County Office of Education and am an Environmental Literacy and Sustainability Coordinator

Julie Ellefson: Julie Ellefson (she, her) Third Act Educators

Scarlett Gonzalez: Hi everyone! Scarlett Gonzalez (she/her), Mass Audubon, based in Boston, MA

Judy Braus: Hi, everyone. I'm Judy Braus from NAAEE calling in from the DC area! Thanks to all of you for being here!

Katie Boyd: Katie Boyd (she/her), Education & Evaluation Specialist at the UW Climate Impacts Group. Hello everyone!

Olivia Griset: Olivia Griset (she, her) Maine Environmental Education Association- calling in from Wabanaki lands now known as Maine

Christina Kwauk: Hi! Christina Kwauk, Unbounded Alliance, calling from PG County, Maryland

Megan Nordgren: Hi! Megan Nordgren, NY Sun Works, calling from NYC.

Breck Foster: Hi! Joining late from Oregon. Breck Foster, Lake Oswego HS, SubjectToClimate, OECE. Go, Sarah!

Coalition-Building Challenges and Questions

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: What's your biggest coalition-building question or challenge?

Alyssa McConkey: So many of us working on understanding and practicing authentic youth adult partnerships.

Alyssa McConkey: Coalition building challenges: time!

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: So true, Alyssa!

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: We love our teachers! Where would we be without them?

Olivia Griset: I agree with Mary and we as adult allies need to really lean into the work of helping raising funds to resource youth to work in this social movement—so they have the capacity to lead statewide work and also to collaborate across states— I feel like in our state the youth climate movement is making huge gains and only has about 10 full time youth working in the movement- so they are doing everything with very very little



philanthropic support— its just a conversation that needs to be taken seriously in the broader climate movement around disparity in funding youth led efforts.

Alyssa McConkey: Yes Olivia!

Adrienne Rajna: What is the difference between climate education and environmental education?

Mary Seawell - CO: We saw those messages really resonating in Colorado, too.

Sarah Kirby - OR: Yes, teachers are a critical piece, as they are on the leading edge of this work...and at capacity with existing mandates, curriculum adoptions, etc.

Scarlett Gonzalez: I think our biggest challenge is finding those youth leaders/smaller orgs/community members that have the time, resources, and capacity to join our coalition meetings. We want and need those voices, but it can be tricky to find the balance given everyone's budget and organizational constraints

Zachary Sprott-Scribner: Challenge: How to maintain momentum among youth groups during changing times... Has anyone had any successful implementation of methods to keep recent graduates involved in their local movements..?

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: We love the Subject to Climate team!

Alyssa McConkey: Yes!

Dennis Nolasco: That connection with industries is so important! Love to see how this develops

Sarah Kirby - OR: Stewardship economies, energy independence, workforce development, youth mental health, community resilience are all very compelling for communities who may not be as readily supportive of "climate change". We've called it "changes on the landscape" as a means of code-switching.

Thoughts on Next Steps

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: Food for thought: Based on what you've heard today, what's ONE next step you'll take in the next 30 days?

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: Move at the speed of trust and relationship

Adrienne Rajna: Is the awareness that the ecological systems of the biosphere are what create the conditions for life. Example: Vegetations roles in regulating temperature of the ground, fertility of the soil, regulating the water cycle, contents of the atmosphere ... Is this included in climate education?

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: Yes, absolutely, Adrienne!

Deb Morrison: Absolutely Adrienne...this comes in throughout the essential principles on climate literacy.

Olivia Griset: Yes!!!! Youth-led and intergenerational is the way to go and we all need to keep working together to advance climate education and share our learning and organizing strategies- we are better together!!!! Thank you all!

Sarah Kirby - OR: Normalizing and formalizing it!

Comments

Judy Braus: What a stellar panel! :-)

Megan Fink, she/her, NAAEE: We love EARTHDAY.ORG - great partners!

Dennis Nolasco: Woohoo! Glad EARTHDAY.ORG could help, Rachel :)

Sarah Kirby - OR: We did indeed partner with more statewide student orgs, but it was challenging to keep up momentum and build cohesion. Statewide, especially.

Rachel Rosner - IL: IOF is working with Mary's students on bringing the Seal to Illinois!

Helen von den Steinen: Thanks for walking us through that Emily. Very helpful!

Jen Kretser: This was wonderful -- needed another hour or 2 to get through it all. You are all amazing and thank you

Judith Lucas Odom: Thank you to all.

Dennis Nolasco: Thank you all!

Mary Seawell - CO: Thank you, Megan!!

Adrienne Rajna: Thank You

Alyssa McConkey: Thank you!

Kasey Gaylord-Opalewski: This was a fabulous conversation! Thanks to all the speakers and for NAAEE for organizing!!

Judy Braus: What a wonderful conversation. Thanks to all the panelists and sharing your experiences!! And thanks to all our partners listening in!

Scarlett Gonzalez: An absolutely amazing conversation and panel! Thank you all for your time and knowledge! And thank you Megan and NAAEE for coordinating this