

# **Teaching Portland Students About the Climate Crisis**

## ***Evaluating the Accuracy of PPS-Adopted Materials — Implementing School Board Resolution #5272***

**Presented by the Portland Public Schools Climate Justice Committee**

On May 17, 2016, the Portland Board of Education passed the most comprehensive climate literacy resolution in the country, Resolution #5272. The third and final piece of the resolution stated that the superintendent’s “implementation plan should include a review of current textbooks for accuracy around the severity of the climate crisis and the impact of human activities. PPS will abandon the use of any adopted text material that is found to express doubt about the severity of the climate crisis or its root in human activities.”

In April 2017, the Portland Public Schools Climate Justice Committee assembled a team of community members — several of them retired PPS teachers, facilitated by social studies TOSA Robi Osborn — to evaluate whether 15 district-adopted social studies and science texts were in compliance with Resolution #5272. Our unanimous conclusion: Not a single book is in compliance.

We found that the books dramatically minimize the severity of the climate crisis. Several adopted textbooks contain no mention of human-caused climate change. The high school economics textbook, *Contemporary Economics*, says nothing in more than 700 pages. *Pursuing American Ideals*, an adopted U.S. history text, includes one sentence out of more than 890 pages. The high school text *Biology*, includes three paragraphs in its 1,100 pages. The middle school text *Issues and Physical Science* includes two paragraphs that relate to climate change in its 400 pages, and the same with the middle school text, *Issues and Life Science*. No PPS-adopted textbook included the kind of rich exploration of causes and consequences of the climate crisis as mandated by Resolution #5272.

Reviewers found that the books were full of missed opportunities. The 8th-grade adoption, *History Alive! The United States Through Industrialization* contains less than a paragraph relating to climate change in 505 pages. One PPS reviewer commented, “While this book goes only through industrialization, the book fails to alert students to the practices and ideology that will ultimately lead us to the climate crisis. These days a history text should do that.” Another reviewer commented about *Magruder’s American Government* text: “How can a book about the U.S. government say nothing about the climate crisis — or environmental policy more broadly? This is egregious, unacceptable.” About the high school AP European History textbook *Western Civilizations*, one reviewer noted that the book talks about the pollution that came with the Industrial Revolution, but here, too, fails to bring this up to the climate crisis. The book contains one sentence on global warming out of its 1,063 pages. *American Spirit Reader*, an AP/IB high school U.S. history adoption includes nothing in its 538 pages relating to climate change. One reviewer noted, “As with other books on U.S. History, there is an opportunity to look at early U.S. history as the prologue to the climate crisis, but this book is utterly silent.”

One of the key components of the School Board's Resolution #5272 is its insistence on student agency. The resolution states that "All Portland Public Schools students should develop confidence and passion when it comes to making a positive difference in society, and come to see themselves as activists and leaders for social and environmental justice—especially through seeing the diversity of people around the world who are fighting the root causes of climate change." To the extent that district-adopted textbooks discuss climate change, no text suggests that students or ordinary people might play a role in addressing this growing threat — or that "frontline communities" are themselves responding to the climate crisis. In its one sentence on climate change, *Pursuing American Ideals* says that "environmentalists fear" problems like global warming. Similarly, *Modern World History* acknowledges that "environmentalists are especially concerned..." and that "Scientists also are worried about global warming..." These are both true, of course, but the resolution's intent is to underscore our students' own role in making the world a better place, rather than assigning concern and action only to scientists and environmentalists.

Last year, the climate-denial Heartland Institute sent copies of its book *Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming* to science teachers throughout the United States, promoting the notion that there is great scientific debate about the human causes of climate change. But language doubting the reality of human-caused climate change can be found in some of our own PPS-adopted textbooks. The AP *World History* textbook tells students that the rise in temperatures "might have serious consequences." *Biology* says that as greenhouse gas concentrations increase global temperatures "may be affected," and that there might be "potential" for serious environmental problems — ignoring that these problems are already well under way. Similarly the middle school text, *Issues and Life Science* says that "another potential threat to Earth's biomes is global climate change." But our students need to know that there is nothing "potential" about this unfolding catastrophe.

The most problematic book that we reviewed was the book adopted for the high school Global Studies/Modern World History course, taken by almost all high school students in the district, Holt McDougal's *Modern World History*. This book erroneously tells students that "Not all scientists agree with the theory of the greenhouse effect." Of course, if there were no "greenhouse effect," there would be no human life on Earth. The text conflates the "greenhouse effect" with human-caused climate change. The book offers a timid, "But tests do indicate that the earth's climate is slowly warming," adding, "If this trend continues, deserts will expand and crops will fail. The polar icecaps will melt and oceans will rise." The book assigns the effects of the climate crisis only to a *potential* future — "if this trend continues..." The heroes of the story that *Modern World History* tells Portland high school students are the very countries that are the biggest polluters, historically and still, on a per capita basis: "To combat this problem [global warming], the industrialized nations have called for limits on the release of greenhouse gases. In the past, developed nations were the worst polluters," neglecting to tell students that they still *are* the worst polluters. *Modern World History* informs students that the villains of this story are the world's poor countries: "So far, developing countries have resisted strict limits."

It is urgent that Portland Public Schools addresses the inadequacies, inaccuracies, and biases contained in textbooks currently being used with our students.

## Textbook Evaluation Rubric: Global Climate Crisis Portland Public Schools

“The implementation plan should include a review of current textbooks for accuracy around the severity of the climate crisis and the impact of human activities. PPS will abandon the use of any adopted text material that is found to express doubt about the severity of the climate crisis or its root in human activities.”

*PPS School Board Resolution #5272*

Title:

Copyright date:

Author(s):

Publisher(s):

Subject/Course/Grade level:

Criteria	Meets (2)	Inadequate (1)	Comments
The text provides stories and examples that help students grasp the immediacy, systemic nature, and gravity of the climate crisis.			
The text alerts students to the societal causes of the climate crisis.			
The text includes actions that people are taking to address the climate crisis, locally and worldwide.			
The text emphasizes that all people are being affected by the climate crisis, but also highlights the inequitable effects of the crisis on certain groups (e.g., Indigenous peoples, people in poverty, Pacific Islanders, people in sub-Saharan Africa, people dependent on glaciers for drinking water and irrigation, etc.).			
The text does not use conditional language that expresses doubt about the climate crisis (e.g., “ <i>Some</i> scientists believe...,” “Human activities <i>may</i> change climate...,” “One <i>possible</i> climate change is caused by the addition of carbon dioxide...”)			
There are discussion and/or writing questions that provoke critical thinking.			

This text contains \_\_\_\_\_ paragraphs / pages / chapters on climate change, out of \_\_\_\_\_ pages / chapters.

# Implementation of PPS School Board Resolution #5272

## *Some highlights*

### Centering Frontline Communities

*“Portland Public Schools commits itself to drawing on local resources to build climate justice curriculum — especially inviting the participation of people from ‘frontline’ communities, which have been the first and hardest hit by climate change.”*

**2016-17 and 2017-18 school years:** Marshall Islands performance poet, Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner leads 33 presentations and writing workshops with almost 2,000 PPS middle and high school students.

**2016-17 and 2017-18 school years:** Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner leads two professional development workshops for 150 PPS teachers and community members; and an inservice for all Madison High School teachers.

**Fall 2017:** Yurok, Hoopa, Karuk, and Klamath youth share information on fossil fuel threats to water and culture. Work with students at five schools.

**Spring 2018:** Field trip of Madison HS 9th graders to meet with Columbia River tribal members to talk about the impact of climate change and “development” on the Columbia River.

### Professional Development

*“Portland Public Schools commits itself to providing teachers, administrators, and other school personnel with professional development, curricular materials, and outdoor and field studies that explore the breadth and causes and consequences of the climate crisis as well as potential solutions that address the root causes of the crisis.”*

**2016-17, 2017-18:** Four day-long inservice workshops for 80 PPS K-12 teachers — asking the question: “What does climate justice look like at our grade level and in our discipline?”

**2016-17, 2017-18:** Four additional climate justice workshops led by committee members. 200 teachers.

**Fall 2017:** Bridger K-8 staff development.

**Spring 2018:** Madison staff development (see above).

### Civic Engagement/Student Activism

*“All Portland Public Schools students should develop confidence and passion when it comes to making a positive difference in society, and come to see themselves as activists and leaders for social and environmental justice.”*

**Winter 2017 and Winter 2018:** “Tend the World” student forums on social and environmental justice. Sponsored with WorldOregon at PSU. Participation: 550 students; workshops led by several PPS students.

**Spring 2017 and Spring 2018:** Madison High School Climate Justice Fair involves all the entire sophomore class, enrolled in Chemistry-for-all classes. 500 students.

**2016-17 and 2017-18:** Lincoln High School Environmental Justice class testimony and Sunnyside Climate Cohort at City Hall, Salem, and PPS school board. 40-plus students.

**2017-18:** HELP PDX student climate leaders lead environmental justice tours. 50 students.

**Spring 2018:** Madison H.S. 9th graders to travel up the Columbia River to meet with tribal representatives about the impact of climate change and “development.”

### **Review of Text Materials**

*“The implementation plan should include a review of current textbooks for accuracy around the severity of the climate crisis and the impact of human activities. PPS will abandon the use of any adopted text material that is found to express doubt about the severity of the climate crisis or its root in human activities.”*

**March 2017:** PPS Climate Justice Committee develops a rubric to evaluate PPS-adopted textbooks for compliance with Resolution #5272.

**April 2017:** At an afternoon evaluation session at the BESC with 14 members of the committee, retired teachers, and community members, all 15 texts reviewed are found to be out of compliance.

# PPS Climate Justice Education Board Resolution #5272



## A Short History of Resolution #5272

- Roosevelt students, Spring 2015
- Students, teachers, parents, and community members meet with PPS Board member, Mike Rosen, and write resolution, Winter 2015/Spring 2016
- Resolution #5272 passes with unanimous board support in May 2016
- Res. #5272 endorsed by the NEA representative assembly, Summer 2016



## Budget crisis . . . climate emergency.



## Commitments from Resolution #5272:

- “The Board of Education directs the Superintendent in collaboration with PPS students, teachers, and community members to develop an implementation plan so that there is curriculum and educational opportunities that address climate change and climate justice in all Portland Public Schools.”*

### Portland Public Schools First to Put Global Climate Justice in Classroom

Students learn about the front lines of global warming and how to be climate activists.





## Centering Frontline Communities

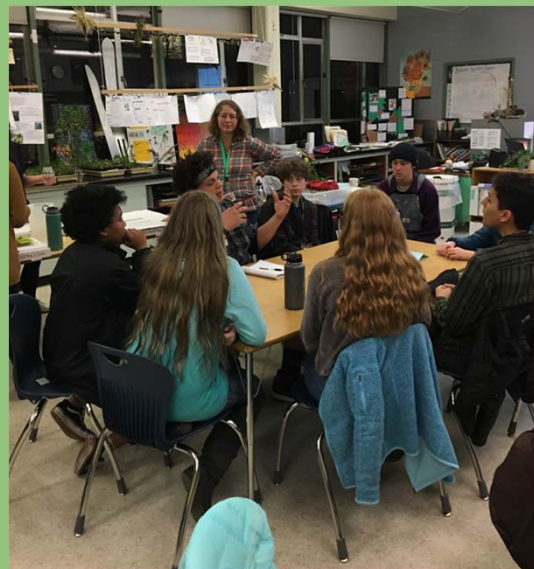
- *“Portland Public Schools commits itself to drawing on local resources to build climate justice curriculum—especially inviting the participation of people from ‘frontline’ communities, which have been the first and hardest hit by climate change—and people who are here, in part, as climate refugees.”*



Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner leads poetry workshops across PPS in April 2017; March 2018

## Nurturing Activism and Civic Engagement

- *“All Portland Public Schools students should develop confidence and passion when it comes to making a positive difference in society, and come to see themselves as activists and leaders for social and environmental justice.”*



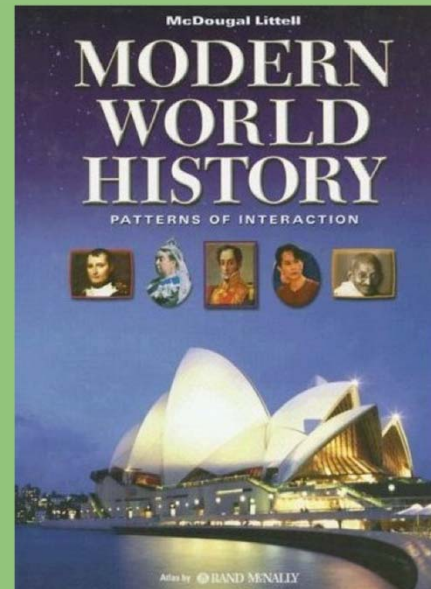
**HELP:** High School Environmental Leadership Project @ Madison HS



## Textbook Accuracy

*"The implementation plan should include a review of current textbooks for accuracy around the severity of the climate crisis and the impact of human activities. PPS will abandon the use of any adopted text material that is found to express doubt about the severity of the climate crisis or its root in human activities."*

1.



We have made  
a promise to  
our students.

## Implementation So Far, 2016-18

- **Professional Development**

- 4 inservice days – 80 teachers
- 4 workshops – 200 teachers
- Bridger K-8 staff PD – Fall 2017
- Madison HS staff PD – Spring 2018

- **Centering Frontline Communities**

- Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner: 30 workshops, 2,000 students, 150 teachers/administrators
- Madison HS Freshman class "Indigenous Knowledge" Columbia Gorge field trip
- Water Is Life Youth Forum/class visits

- **Community Partnerships**

- Organizations: 350PDX, Neighbors for Clean Air, OPAL Environmental Justice, HELP, APANO, Sierra Club, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, Stop Fracked Gas/PDX

- **Student Civic Engagement**

- Madison HS Climate Justice Fair - 500 students
- "Tend the World" Youth Forums, co-sponsored with WorldOregon, 2017 and 2018 – 550 students
- Lincoln HS Environmental Justice class testimony and Sunnyside Climate Cohort at City Hall, Salem, and at PPS School Board - more than 40 students
- HELP PDX student climate leaders – 50 students & Environmental Justice Tours

- **Curriculum Development**

- Textbook review, April 2017 – 15 texts, all out of compliance
- PPS Climate Justice website





## Water Is Life



Fall of 2017

## Tend the World Youth Forum

2018





Collaboration between PPS  
CJC, HELP, Portland Harbor  
Community Coalition,  
Neighbors for Clean Air and  
350PDX



Climate Justice Tours

### The Impact of Frontline Communities: Our Students' Responses to Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner

"It was important to hear from someone in a frontline community. A lot of people here may be concerned for the environment, but aren't directly and drastically affected (for now) by climate change like the Pacific Islanders are."

-Isa Menesez

**The Impact of  
Frontline  
Communities: Our  
Students' Responses  
to Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner**

“It was interesting to see someone who was fighting climate change, but seemed like a real person. It opened my eyes when I saw a climate change activist in the flesh. It gave me the sense of it being possible to actually do activist work.”

- Kieran Turnbull

**Our Students' Voices: Why Climate Justice?**

“It's imperative that we are taught this. Since we are the next generation that will be left with these crippling effects of climate change, we need to understand what is happening to our planet so we can play a role in trying to fight it.”

- Kate Denhart

## Summary -- What we've found:

- All PPS textbooks out of compliance with #5272
- Teachers don't have adequate resources
- Many administrators and teachers are unaware of Resolution #5272
- Students are responding in incredibly positive ways (as seen through work with Kathy J-K)

## Madison Staff Climate Justice PD Teacher Exit Ticket Results

- Already teaching Climate Justice - ~ 30% - in courses including Science, English, Social Studies, Ethnic Studies, ELL & Math
- Have curriculum developed enough to share - 10-15%
- Would be available to collaborate on curriculum development - 25%
- Confidence presenting CJ curriculum (1 Low - 5 high) - Average of ~ 2.9



## Support Needed: 2018-2020

- **Curriculum Development**
  - Climate Justice Curriculum Camp, Summer 2019
  - Four release days for teacher leaders across levels/disciplines to workshop curriculum, 2019-20
  - PPS Climate Justice website development
- **Professional Development**
  - “Train the trainers” to deliver Climate Justice PD to every building for 2019/20
- **Student Civic Engagement**
  - PPS Student Climate Justice conference, Spring 2019
- **Centering Frontline Communities**
  - Funding speakers from local Indigenous groups (Wisdom of the Elders, NAYA, CRITFC, et al.) and partnerships to develop NW-based climate justice curriculum
- **Administrative Support**
  - Support full and equitable implementation across the district

“Climate education is not a niche or a specialization, it is the minimum requirement for my generation to be successful in our changing world. We don’t have my lifetime to wait. We don’t even have the couple years it will be before I’m truly an adult. My action starts now, or it works never.”

~ Gaby Lemieux, PPS Graduate, 2017







OFFICE OF TEACHING & LEARNING  
2018-2019

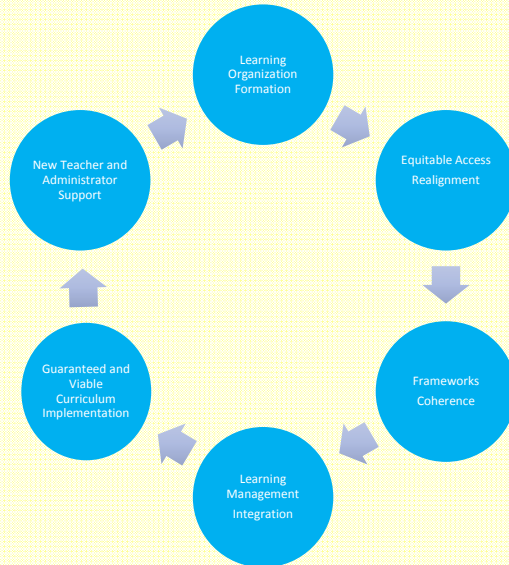
Luis Valentino, Ed.D.

Chief Academic Officer

Mission of the Office of Teaching & Learning

*“The Office of Teaching and Learning will ensure that all students have equitable access to a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum, that is rigorous, authentic, comprehensive and sustainable, particularly those who have been historically underserved.”*

## OTL Priorities



## Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

Implement across all disciplines and levels

- Humanities
- STEM
- Multilingual Pathways
- Professional Learning and Leadership
- Funded Programs
- Early learners

## Frameworks Integration

Bring coherence and alignment across expectations

- District Strategic Plan
- Curriculum Framework
- High School Strategic Plan
- TAG Plan
- Language Framework
- Etc.

## Professional Learning

- Build Internal Capacity
- Implement Cycles of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement (ROCI)
- Provide Professional Learning Opportunities
- Learning Management Systems
- New Teacher and Administrator Supports
- Keep Equity at the Center

## Questions

# OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

GOALS AND NEXT STEPS  
4/9/2018

BRENDA MARTINEK,  
CHIEF OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

## Mission of the Office

### □ Draft Mission:

***“Provide culturally responsive services, programs and systems of support to students and families which contribute to the academic and social emotional success for all students”***

### □ Considerations:

- Newly formed Office
- Will gather stakeholders from many departments to work on mission/vision/goals of the office

## Goals for remainder of year and 2018-19

- Align systems and frameworks with OSP and OTL for a seamless system of support
- Implement a comprehensive MTSS through a four year roll-out plan along with Article 6 of PAT contract
- Research and implement a Drug & Alcohol / Dual Diagnosis continuum of care plan
- Implement Student Threat Assessment process
- Review contracts in all departments to look for efficiencies and monitoring components

## Plans for Efficiencies

### How we will make our department more efficient:

- Prioritize mandatory services (SPED, 504, Expulsions/alternative placements)
- Reduce consumable supplies
- Reduce contracts and monitor for effectiveness of contracted services
- Eliminate contract with county for student support collaborative position
- Reorganize/Eliminate some administrative positions
- Restructure School Climate team to align with MTSS implementation



## Next Steps

- Partner with budget analyst to complete the budget alignment and with Human Resources for job classifications / postings
- Communicate reduction/reorganization of positions for administrative staff
- Post for positions and hire staff
- Organize and facilitate vision / mission work for the newly formed office with stakeholders
- Assemble community, staff and admin to participate in reviewing efficiencies within newly formed office to help prioritize future planning
- Coordinate meeting structure, reporting formats and processes for how the office runs smoothly to ensure success for students and families