

Introduction:

Since 1901, the [Earth's global temperature has risen by .17 degrees Fahrenheit per decade](#). There are many consequences of ignoring the rising global temperature. Some of these are [measurable dramatic changes to the environment, negative effects on human health, and rising sea levels](#).

Addressing this issue has been debated repeatedly, and yet, little to no significant changes have been made. With the issue becoming increasingly politicized, successful environmental action is occurring at an even lower rate. The lack of progress is a result of political standoffs when policies are introduced. Political standoffs are rooted in the conflicting opinion of the public. These conflicting opinions are formed due to generation, wealth, education, experiences, and education.

Proposal:

To counter this political standoff, we propose the creation of a new middle school curriculum with the basis of hands-on environmental learning. This curriculum will initially launch in the state of Virginia and will expand to other states upon its success. The program is made up of grade-specific learning activities:

- Sixth and seventh graders will learn about introductory information in environmental science with community outreach projects such as working with local organizations on environmental restoration and clean-up.
- Eighth grade will learn about current events regarding the environment and topics that show the progression and effects of climate issues. They will also focus on the environmental impacts of food production. In greenhouses installed on campus, students will grow fresh produce for their school cafeteria, saving their school money in the long run. Students will visit their local farmers to understand the agriculture industry and will continue the connection with mentors in the industry.
- There will be a one-time \$5000 cost to build a 250-square-foot greenhouse. The greenhouses will produce an annual yield of 625 pounds of produce. The produce being put back into the school should lower the cost of school lunches by around 50 cents.

Benefits:

Introducing a curriculum that educates children on the environment will bring awareness to future generations on environmental issues. This, in turn, will pressure those in the political arena to bring about and put into motion policies that will positively affect the environment. Having a greenhouse in all middle schools will produce food that will go back into the school, lowering the school's cost of food and possibly freeing up funds that can be allocated to other aspects of education.

Conclusion:

Conclusion: this plan has positive long and short-term effects. In the short term, the schools will save money on lunches and reduce the student lunch debt while allowing those who can't typically afford lunch to be able to get it. In the long term, this curriculum will allow for our future generation to be committed and excited to influence political and environmental issues.