

Letter to the New Education Secretary (U.S.)
from prominent education and environment leaders
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[excerpt (p. 96-99) from [“Global Warming Awareness, Climate Change Awareness, and Climate Emergency Action” A Survey: 1961-2020](#) (240 highlights from reports, websites, articles, books, etc.) (316 pages; November, 2020) compiled by Stefan Pasti for The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability Initiative at www.cpcsi.org ; [“Quick Reference to 10 Key Graphs and Charts”](#) (6 pages =last six pages in “Survey”)]
[Note: Worldwatch Institute no longer active (2017) (Wikipedia)]

“An Open Letter to the New Education Secretary”

“Worldwatch is pleased to publish this open letter from prominent education and environment leaders urging the newly nominated U.S. education secretary, Arne Duncan, to consider the importance of education in carrying out President-elect Barack Obama's environmental agenda. “

“Dear Mr. Duncan:

“Congratulations on your nomination. As you jump into the daunting challenge of bolstering our sagging education system, you have a powerful opportunity presented by the need to create a carbon-free economy.

“President-elect Obama has astutely perceived the linkages between climate change, economic stimulus, energy security, and job training by declaring that the transition to a green economy is his “top priority.” The missing link in this system is the critical role that education can play in quickly making the green economy a reality....

“Transforming our nation's economic, energy, and environmental systems to move toward a green economy will require a level of expertise, innovation, and cooperative effort unseen since the 1940s to meet the challenges involved.

“Creating millions of new green jobs through targeted investment and spending is one thing; filling those jobs with qualified candidates is quite another thing. This transition will require a massive job training (and retraining) effort on the part of business, government, and education if it is to scale up quickly.

“But green manufacturing workforce development programs are just one piece of what is needed; the green economy will not be driven by manufacturing workers alone. Architects, engineers, planners, scientists, business managers, financial experts, lawyers, entrepreneurs, political leaders, resource managers, and many others, as well as workers - not to mention environmentally literate consumers - will all be needed to drive the green economy.

“American workers, managers, and professionals at all levels and in all sectors must understand the foundations of a green economy as represented in leading environmental and sustainability education programs. These foundations call for redesigning the human economy to emulate nature: operating on renewable energy, creating a circular production economy in which the concept of ‘waste’ is eliminated because all waste products are raw materials or nutrients for the industrial economy, and managing human activities in a way that uses natural resources only at the rate that they can self-regenerate (the ideas embodied in sustainable forestry, fishing, and agriculture).

“To produce such a literate workforce and citizenry, America will need to make major new investments in our educational systems to implement the green economy and keep new green jobs from migrating out of America.”

“It has been well proven that an investment in education and innovation--in human capital--is without a doubt the best investment that can be made in long-term, across-the-board economic growth. Public investments in education for a green economy will more than pay for themselves, just as the post-Sputnik education programs did in the 1950s and ‘60s and the G.I. Bill did in the 1940s.”

“In addition, ‘Education for a Green Economy’ is a politically unifying strategy:

A serious commitment to global competitiveness and innovation appeals to a wide range of stakeholders: Americans concerned with security and energy independence, economic development, climate change, and the environment; blue-collar workers and citizens calling for increasing investment in new ‘green jobs’; parents, students, and teachers; clean technology and green venture capital firms; and the academic community.”

“Recent legislation authorizing investments to support sustainability programs in higher education, improve education in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), and build healthy, high performance "green schools" (both K-12 and higher education) have passed with broad bipartisan support, but have yet to be significantly funded.”

“We, the undersigned, therefore respectfully urge you to support the following proposed Presidential agenda as it pertains to your department:

An Action Agenda for a Healthy, Just, and Sustainable Economy

- The President should announce a sweeping initiative to support education as a cornerstone of our new clean energy future. This initiative should be part of an economic stimulus package with a focus on green jobs and green education to help Americans of all ages, all backgrounds, and all walks of life transition to the green economy.
- The President should launch a series of White House Conferences on Creating Healthier, Greener Communities and Economies. Conference themes, co-sponsored with key federal agencies, would focus on building a more equitable and green economy, promote social equity, and support service learning to engage youth in greening local communities.
- Support a national goal of 100% of renovation and new school construction to meet "Green Schools" Standards by 2012. Declare a Department of Education policy to support a national goal that 100 percent of newly constructed or rehabilitated schools (both K-12 and higher education) to become "Green Schools" to lower energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, and provide opportunities for formal and non-formal environmental education.
- Support legislation to direct 1% of climate change cap-and-trade revenues to education for a green economy. This comprehensive education bill would advance education for a green economy through major adjustments to K-12 education, school-to-work programs, higher education, professional re-education, and consumer and public education, in order to equip our American workforce and citizenry with the needed skills and knowledge to maximize environmental and economic gains in the transition to a green economy. Related legislation to significantly expand and improve environmental education in our public K-12 schools (the No Child Left Behind Act) should also be supported.
- Establish a strong record of funding existing education programs through the President's budget requests for the University Sustainability Program, environmental education programs at the Environmental Protection Agency, National Science Foundation and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the new Energy Efficiency Grants and Loans program at the Department of Energy.
- Make new Administration appointments:
 - a. Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary of Education, Education for a Green Economy
 - b. Senior Policy Advisor to the NOAA Administrator, Climate Change Education
 - c. Environmental Education Advisor, Council of Environmental Quality
 - d. Senior Policy Advisor to the Director of the US Peace Corps, Sustainability and Environmental Education
- Direct all federal resources agencies to develop and conduct "education for a green economy" and climate change literacy training for all personnel to familiarize them with challenges, needs, and appropriate responses for each agency.”

“One of the most hopeful signs for the future is the rapidly developing consensus that investment in a clean/green economy is the best way to improve national security, create millions of jobs, restore U.S. economic leadership, and stop large-scale climate disruption that could undercut modern civilization. It is time to reorient the education system to make this a reality-humanity is depending on us.”

With our best wishes for your success,

David E. Blockstein, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, National Council for Science and the Environment

Judy Braus, Senior Vice President of Education, National Audubon Society

Antony D. Cortese, Sc.D., President, Second Nature

Kevin J. Coyle, Vice President for Education, National Wildlife Federation

Brian A. Day, Executive Director, North American Association for Environmental Education

James L Elder, Ph.D., Director, Campaign for Environmental Literacy

Christopher Flavin, President, Worldwatch Institute

Judy Walton, Ph.D., Acting Executive Director, Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

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