

Support for Environmental Curriculum

■ Key Points

- Most Canadian educators agree that it is important for students to learn about environmental topics such as biodiversity loss and climate change.
- **47 per cent** of educators feel they have the knowledge and skills needed to teach about climate change, but only **23 per cent** feel confident teaching about the behaviour changes needed to address the issue. Educators are less prepared to teach about biodiversity loss.
- Despite these gaps, over **80 per cent** of educators agree that environmental topics such as biodiversity loss and climate change should be integrated throughout K–12 schooling.
- With strategic investment in educator training and deeper integration of nature-based education into curriculum, we can close these gaps and empower teachers to drive generational change.

■ What is the Issue?

Canada faces twin environmental crises: climate change and biodiversity loss. Yet most young Canadians aren't receiving the education needed to understand or act on these challenges. Educators being ill-equipped with teaching resources is a major barrier.

According to a survey conducted by the [Canadian Wildlife Federation \(CWF\)](#) in 2024 with Abacus Data, teachers reported:

- Only a moderate confidence in teaching climate and biodiversity content
- Limited access to engaging, classroom-ready Canadian resources
- Insufficient training in environmental and nature-based education approaches
- Systemic gaps in curriculum and assessment that sideline environmental learning

These challenges were echoed in the Mainstreaming Environmental Literacy dialogues held in Vancouver (2023) and Kelowna (2024) which called for coherent national approaches to training, curriculum integration and resource development.

■ Trends and Challenges

Educators overwhelmingly agree that environmental topics should be core to student learning. Yet, [only 47 per cent](#) of educators feel they have the knowledge and skills needed to teach about climate change, and

less felt prepared to address biodiversity. At the same time, over 80 per cent agreed these topics should be embedded across K–12 education.

The trend is clear: **demand for biodiversity and climate change education is rising from both educators and students**, but systems for training, curriculum integration and resource support are lagging. Teachers report inadequate professional development, limited access to Canadian classroom-ready resources and gaps in curriculum and assessment frameworks. These systemic issues leave most educators underprepared, despite their willingness to lead change.

■ Why is this Important?

Educators are key to building environmental literacy and agency. When they're supported, educators can:

- Confidently integrate biodiversity and climate change education across subjects and grades
- Empower students to understand biophysical systems at multiple scales, explore solutions and act locally
- Foster resilience, ecological identity and civic engagement
- Connect students with careers and communities rooted in nature

Research from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's [Agency in the Anthropocene](#) as well as North American Association for Environmental Education's [Stanford analysis](#) reveals a wide array of benefits from environmental education. It also confirms that **environmental learning improves academic outcomes, increases student motivation and builds lifelong citizenship skills.**

■ Recommendations

To empower educators as biodiversity and climate change leaders, governments and institutions should:

- Expand and fund professional development in climate change, biodiversity and conservation education
- Ensure curriculum frameworks across Canada embed environmental learning across subjects and grades
- Provide bilingual, accessible, classroom-ready resources that reflect local ecosystems and communities
- Support mentorship networks and communities of practice to promote teacher leadership and collaboration
- Embed environmental education competencies into teacher credentialing and ongoing performance expectations
- Recognize Indigenous-led approaches, land-based learning and intergenerational knowledge-sharing as vital components

■ CWF'S Role

CWF is directly addressing these gaps by developing and delivering training, resources and networks to empower educators. CWF's [WILD Education](#) program equips teachers with curriculum-linked, experiential learning strategies rooted in Canadian ecosystems. [WILD Spaces](#) engages educators and students in hands-on pollinator conservation, linking classroom learning with local stewardship action. Distance-learning initiatives expand access to professional development, ensuring rural and remote educators have access to resources and opportunities.

CWF also convenes national and regional dialogues to align educator training with broader education policy and climate goals. In addition, CWF actively supports the development and implementation of the [National Framework for Environmental Learning](#) and ensures that Canadian education efforts contribute directly to the targets set out in the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#). By supporting mentorship, promoting Indigenous-led approaches and embedding place-based and intergenerational knowledge, **CWF is building a coherent national framework to help educators teach about climate change and biodiversity loss with confidence.**



■ Sources For More Information

- [Stanford analysis reveals wide array of benefits from environmental education \(2022\)](#)
- [OECD PISA: Agency in the Anthropocene \(2023\)](#)

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