

Vermont Climate Resilient Schools

Case Studies

Vermont schools and students are learning about climate change in ways that build a complex understanding of the issues and connect everyday actions to collectively make a big difference. The case studies represent four schools that are engaging in climate change education, focusing on resilience and adaptation. Each case study features a story that illustrates what the students and educators are doing, offers tips on getting started, and lists resources that they found helpful in their work. All of them are inspiring and offer hope for the future!

This project is part of the New England Environmental Education Association's "Advancing Climate Change Education in New England".

[Burr & Burton Mountain Campus](#) Peru, VT

The Burr and Burton Mountain Campus semester program brings students from Burr and Burton Academy to the southern Vermont woods — and a LEED Platinum certified timber-frame building — grounding them in a strong sense of place, self, and community to better tackle the issues of climate change. Faculty members Ben Freeman, Jillian Joyce, Cindy Mowry, and Paul Kelly collaboratively plan and lead an extremely interdisciplinary, ecological program for 25 students in grades 10–12. Learning experiences range from cooking shared meals and collecting data on building systems, to outdoor wilderness expeditions and ecology lessons in the field, to meeting with community professionals working on climate change and participating in Vermont's legislative process.



[Edge Academy/Essex Middle School](#) Essex, VT

At the Edge Academy, climate resilience and sustainability are “just practices that are incorporated into our daily lives.” The school-within-a-school offers project-based, hands-on learning for grades 7 and 8 at its Essex Middle School campus. Student-led projects have included solar panels, a sugarhouse, beehives, and district-wide composting.

“All the projects really tie in education for sustainability, and positive impact in the community,” Halman reflects. “They are just practices that are incorporated into our daily lives.”

Lindsey Halman, Educator Edge Academy

Main Street Middle School Montpelier, VT

Main Street Middle School's Team Summit, led by Amy Kimball and Don Taylor, uses a committee model to engage students in small-scale climate resilience projects. Students have saved school supplies from the landfill, collected hard-to-recycle bottle caps and batteries, set up classroom composting for their school community, conducted an idling study, and successfully banned single-use water bottles from being sold in the building.



Thetford Elementary School Thetford, VT

Thetford Elementary School has planted school gardens, installed a solar array, and dramatically reduced their waste through "serious" composting and recycling. The K-6 school has moved from one project to the next organically, as opportunities arise, led by school nurse Joette Hayashigawa, school board member Erin Sterner, and other school faculty and community members



Advancing Climate Change Education in New England

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