



**Jones, Stephanie**

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**From:** Gregory Schubert <gregory\_schubert@fcasd.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 16, 2021 8:09 PM  
**To:** ED, State Board of Ed  
**Subject:** [External] PA Science, Environment and Ecology Standards

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Dear Karen,

I have been teaching an Advanced Placement Environmental Science class since 2004 at a PA public high school in a wealthy suburban school district. This course has a prerequisite of high school Biology and Chemistry and the students who take the class are college-bound juniors and seniors. These students are highly capable.

Yet, initially the students enrolled in the APES class are oblivious to human impact on the environment regarding a wide range of topics including water consumption, agriculture, mining, forestry, energy use and climate change. If the minds of Pennsylvania's public school students are not made aware of how choices that they make everyday damage the environment, if we do not educate our future leaders about the importance of protecting the systems that provide essential ecosystems services like clean water, if we allow the general public to be misled by social media about the impacts or even the validity of climate change, the results will be disastrous.

The need for environmental education is more important than ever. Western society has treated both renewable and nonrenewable resources as infinite, which they are not. We are polluting the air, water and soil on which we depend for food. Climate change threatens the ability of crops to survive catastrophic weather events from heat waves, drought, floods, erosion and frost. I'm not talking about preserving some abstract concept of biodiversity, I'm talking about saving ourselves.

When my students complete my course, they understand where resources come from, how the use of these resources impact ecosystems and how to mitigate the impact. Unfortunately, it is only within the context of this one course that students develop this understanding, and perhaps 4% of each graduating class is privileged to receive this information. It is imperative that environmental education in Pennsylvania public schools be expanded, not reduced.

thank you,  
Greg Schubert  
Fox Chapel Area School District