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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from What Teachers Want to Know About Teaching Climate Change.

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ELEVATING BIPOC YOUTH CLIMATE ACTIVISTS

Researchers Berberian et al. (2022) found that the children of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) from frontline communities, those that are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, are particularly vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change, and infants and children of color have experienced adverse perinatal outcomes, occupational heat stress, and increases in emergency department visits associated with extreme weather. Additionally, youth from frontline communities are also underrepresented within the environmental movement. To protect our planet, the input and contributions of as many people as possible must be incorporated. Greta Thunberg may be the most recognizable youth climate activist, but there are other BIPOC youth climate activists who are directly from frontline communities impacted by climate change. The next time you want to introduce students to a youth climate activist, consider incorporating these young people and their stories into your lessons. Students can also research these youth climate activists for lessons incorporating biographies, writing, or English/Language Arts. Learn more about them and their stories below.



What other ways might you incorporate these young activists into your curriculum?

More Young Activists to Share With Your Students

- **Aletta Brady:** A queer writer, organizer, and strategist from Minneapolis, Minnesota; the founder and executive director of Our Climate Voices; a member of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO's Youth Working Group; and a former Fulbright research fellow in Jordan.
- **Isaias Hernandez:** An environmentalist and eco-educator. Through social platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and X, Isaias shares accessible content under his brand Queer Brown Vegan to educate people on various topics related to environmental justice and green living.
- **Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner:** A Marshallese writer, poet, journalist, and climate change activist, Kathy co-founded the nonprofit Jo-Jikum, dedicated to empowering Marshallese youth to seek solutions to climate change and other environmental impacts.
- **Thomas Tonatiuh Lopez, Jr.:** Thomas is a descendant of the Otomi, Diné, Apache, and Lakota people. He spent months working with the International Indigenous Youth Council (IIYC) on the ground at Standing Rock to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.
- **Autumn Peltier:** An Indigenous rights activist and designated "water protector," Autumn Peltier empowers young people with the tools they need to protect the environment. As the chief water commissioner for the Anishinabek Nation, she has

spent nearly half her life speaking about the importance of clean water to organizations, including the United Nations and the World Economic Forum.

- Rebeca Sabnam: A Bangladeshi American teen activist highlighting risks Bangladeshi women and Rohingya face due to climate change.

More Ways to Get Your Students Involved

There are countless ways students can get involved as climate change activists that are linked to existing curriculum. For example, they can create a book of young climate activists to practice research skills and information literacy. When finished with their books, students can also engage in “buddy reading” with students who are older or younger at their school to spread awareness about notable climate activists. Additionally, students might consider contacting one or more of the youth activists they know of through social media.

Children have specific rights that are laid out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Knowing their rights can help students advocate for climate actions across multiple curricular levels and entry points. Older students can engage in a research project and read the Articles of the Convention to see which ones apply to climate justice and which Articles the youth climate activists advocate for.

Inside the Movement has campaigns and direct actions that students can use for more inspiration for how to get involved. Check out their website for ideas: <https://itm.earth/>

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