



Teachers Agree That Climate Change is Real and Should Be Taught in Schools

Ipsos/NPR poll of teachers on climate change

Washington, DC, April 22, 2019 – Ipsos, in collaboration with NPR, interviewed teachers across the nation to understand how they view the issue of climate change and how the subject should be taught, if at all, in classrooms. These teachers, from kindergarten to 12th grade, firmly agree that the world’s climate is changing (82%) and that the phenomenon should be taught in schools (86%).

Though a vast majority of teachers believe that climate change should be taught in schools, it is not top of mind compared to other subjects they believe are needed in schools. Twenty-nine percent of all teachers think that S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is the worthiest of additional resources to expand the curriculum of their schools, followed by basic literacy (25%). Just five percent cite climate as their first choice and 7% cite climate change as their second choice for expanded funding.

Teachers are more likely than the general population to believe the world’s climate is changing. Eighty-two percent of teachers think that the world’s climate is changing, [compared to 74% of all Americans](#). The majority of teachers (62%) think that weather-related incidents are becoming more severe, echoing the beliefs of Americans as a whole (61%). Teachers are also more likely to believe that climate change is caused either mostly or entirely by humans (39%) than caused by natural processes (18%).

Seventy-four percent of teachers believe that climate change, along with its impacts on our environment, economy, and society, should be taught in schools. An additional 12% of teachers think that climate change should be taught in schools, but not its potential impacts. Less than one in ten teachers (8%) think that schools should not teach anything about climate change. Among those teachers who believe climate change should be taught in schools, the vast majority of them (72%) do not think that parental permission should be required and a majority (53%) say the subject should be taught in kindergarten or elementary school.

Teachers are divided in how they see their own personal roles in teaching climate change. Fifty-five percent of teachers do not currently teach or talk to their students about climate change. The other 42% of teachers educate and discuss with their students about climate change. Among those who do not teach climate change, a strong majority of them (65%) do not do so because it is not related to the subjects that they teach.

Most teachers feel comfortable answering students’ questions about climate change, but this varies greatly based on teachers who actually talk about the subject versus those that don’t. Teachers who teach climate change (91%) are more like to feel comfortable answering students’ questions about the subject than those teachers who don’t (56%). Teachers who actually talk about climate change are also more like to say that there should be state laws in place that require teaching climate change (70% vs. 38% of teachers who don’t talk about climate change). Teachers who educate about climate change are also more likely to say they have the resources they need to answer students’ questions about climate change (77% vs. 32%), that their students have brought up climate change in the classroom this year (78% vs. 14%), and that their schools encourage them to discuss climate change (64% vs. 18%).

Teachers are pessimistic about society’s ability to stop or lessen the effects of climate change. Among teachers who believe in climate change, 37% think that climate change can be stopped, either in their lifetime (12%) or in the next generations’ lifetime (25%). Around half (54%) think that climate change can’t be stopped, but we can lessen the effects. The remaining 5% think that there is nothing we can do to stop or reverse climate change. Teachers also think that global warming or climate change pose a threat to the United States. Around eight in ten (81%) teachers think that climate change is at least a moderate threat to the country.

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



Press Release – continued –

1. Do you currently work as an educator in:

	Total (N = 505)	Teaches Climate Change (N = 207)	Does Not Teach Climate Change (N = 281)
Kindergarten	12%	9%	14%
1-6 grade	42%	39%	44%
7-8 grade	12%	12%	12%
9-10 grade	33%	35%	32%
11-12 grade	32%	32%	33%

2. When it comes to expanding the curriculum of your school, which of the following do you think is most worthy of additional resources?

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
S.T.E.M.	29%	26%	31%
Basic literacy	25%	23%	26%
Financial education	21%	20%	22%
Sex education	6%	10%	3%
Climate change	5%	6%	3%
My school has plenty of resources to teach all subjects	9%	11%	7%
Other	2%	3%	2%
Don't know	3%	-	4%

3. And which subject would be your second choice?

	Teachers Who Think Schools Needs More Resources (N = 439)	Teaches Climate Change (N = 183)	Does Not Teach Climate Change (N = 243)
Basic literacy	29%	22%	34%
S.T.E.M.	29%	33%	26%
Financial education	24%	21%	25%
Climate change	7%	11%	4%
Sex education	6%	7%	5%
Other	4%	4%	3%
Don't know	2%	2%	3%

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



Press Release – continued –

4. Do you think weather-related incidents are becoming more severe, less severe, or staying about the same?

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Becoming more severe	62%	73%	55%
Staying about the same	31%	24%	37%
Becoming less severe	3%	3%	2%
Don't know	4%	-	6%

5. As far as you know, do you think the world's climate is changing or not?

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Yes, I think that the world's climate is changing	82%	91%	74%
No, I do not think that the world's climate is changing	12%	7%	16%
Don't know	6%	2%	10%

6. Do you think climate change can be stopped? *Asked of people who answered "Yes, I think that the world's climate is changing" to question five.*

	Believe Climate Change Exists (N = 412)	Teaches Climate Change (N = 189)	Does Not Teach Climate Change (N = 209)
Yes, climate change can be stopped in my lifetime	12%	15%	9%
Yes, climate change can be stopped in the next generation's lifetime	25%	30%	19%
Climate change can't be stopped, but we can lessen the effects	54%	48%	61%
There is nothing we can do to stop or reverse climate change	5%	3%	6%
Don't know	5%	3%	5%

7. Thinking about the causes of climate change, which, if any, of the following best describes your opinion?

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Climate change is entirely a natural process	7%	7%	8%
Climate change is mostly a natural process	11%	5%	14%
Climate change is partly a natural process and partly human caused	41%	39%	43%
Climate change is mostly caused by human activity	32%	39%	26%
Climate change is entirely human caused	8%	10%	6%
Climate change does not exist	2%	-	2%
<i>Natural process (net)</i>	18%	12%	22%
<i>Human caused (net)</i>	39%	49%	32%

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



Press Release – continued –

8. How much of a threat does global warming or climate change pose to the United States? *Thomson Reuters trend question.*

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Very serious threat	22%	35%	12%
Serious threat	27%	33%	24%
Moderate threat	32%	25%	37%
Minimal threat	11%	6%	16%
No threat	3%	1%	5%
Not sure	4%	1%	6%
<i>Very serious/serious threat (net)</i>	49%	67%	36%
<i>Minimal/no threat (net)</i>	14%	7%	21%

9. Which of the following comes closest to your own view?

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Schools should teach about climate change and its impacts on our environment, economy, and society	74%	86%	66%
Schools should teach that climate change exists, but not the potential impacts	12%	11%	13%
Schools should not teach anything about climate change	8%	3%	11%
Don't know	6%	*	10%

10. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Parental permission should be required before teaching climate change. *Asked of people who answered "Schools should teach about climate change and its impacts on our environment, economy, and society" or "Schools should teach that climate change exists, but not the potential impacts" to question nine.*

	Believe Climate Change Should Be Taught in Schools (N = 467)	Teaches Climate Change (N = 202)	Does Not Teach Climate Change (N = 248)
Strongly agree	8%	9%	6%
Somewhat agree	15%	13%	18%
Somewhat disagree	25%	18%	30%
Strongly disagree	47%	59%	38%
Don't know	5%	2%	7%
<i>Agree (net)</i>	23%	22%	24%
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	72%	76%	68%

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



Press Release – continued –

11. When should climate change first be taught in schools? *Asked of people who answered “Schools should teach about climate change and its impacts on our environment, economy, and society” or “schools should teach that climate change exists, but not the potential impacts” to question nine.*

	Believe Climate Change Should Be Taught in Schools	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Kindergarten	9%	15%	4%
Elementary school (1 st to 5 th grade)	44%	52%	38%
Middle school (6 th to 8 th grade)	30%	25%	35%
High School (9 th to 12 th grade)	13%	9%	18%
College or Post-high school	*	-	1%
Don't know	3%	-	4%

12. Do you currently teach your students, or talk to them, about climate change?

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Yes	42%	100%	-
No	55%	-	100%
Don't know	3%	-	-

13. In a few words or short sentences, please describe how you teach your students, or talk to them, about climate change. Please be as specific as possible. *Asked of people who answered “Yes” to question twelve; those who teach or talk to their student about climate change.*

[Awaiting open-ended responses]

14. Please indicate the reasons why you do not teach your students about climate change. You can select up to three. *Asked of people who answered “No” to question twelve; those who do not teach or talk to their student about climate change.*

	Does Not Teach Climate Change
It's not related to the subject(s) I teach	65%
Students are too young	20%
I don't know enough about it	17%
I don't have the materials needed to teach the subject	17%
I don't believe in climate change	8%
State mandates it taught at a different grade level	6%
My school does not allow it	4%
Students have already learned about it in school	2%
Other	5%
Don't know	3%

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



Press Release – continued –

15. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Agree (net)	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
I feel comfortable answering students' questions about climate change	71%	91%	56%
There should be state laws in place that require teaching climate change	52%	70%	38%
I have the resources I need to answer students' questions about climate change	51%	77%	32%
My students have brought up climate change in the classroom this year	41%	78%	14%
My school or school district encourages us to discuss climate change in the classroom	37%	64%	18%
I worry about parent complaints when it comes to teaching climate change	29%	30%	29%
I would be personally uncomfortable if I had to teach about climate change	21%	15%	27%

a. I have the resources I need to answer students' questions about climate change

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Strongly agree	17%	30%	8%
Somewhat agree	34%	46%	23%
Somewhat disagree	25%	15%	31%
Strongly disagree	18%	6%	29%
Don't know	6%	2%	8%
<i>Agree (net)</i>	51%	77%	32%
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	43%	21%	60%

b. My school or school district encourages us to discuss climate change in the classroom

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Strongly agree	12%	24%	3%
Somewhat agree	26%	40%	15%
Somewhat disagree	22%	16%	26%
Strongly disagree	15%	6%	22%
Don't know	26%	14%	33%
<i>Agree (net)</i>	37%	64%	18%
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	37%	22%	49%

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



Press Release – continued –

c. My students have brought up climate change in the classroom this year

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Strongly agree	19%	41%	2%
Somewhat agree	22%	36%	12%
Somewhat disagree	23%	14%	29%
Strongly disagree	30%	6%	50%
Don't know	6%	3%	7%
<i>Agree (net)</i>	41%	78%	14%
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	53%	20%	79%

d. There should be state laws in place that require teaching climate change

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Strongly agree	19%	32%	8%
Somewhat agree	33%	38%	30%
Somewhat disagree	19%	11%	25%
Strongly disagree	15%	8%	22%
Don't know	14%	11%	15%
<i>Agree (net)</i>	52%	70%	38%
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	34%	19%	47%

e. I feel comfortable answering students' questions about climate change

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Strongly agree	33%	53%	16%
Somewhat agree	39%	38%	40%
Somewhat disagree	18%	8%	26%
Strongly disagree	5%	1%	9%
Don't know	6%	1%	9%
<i>Agree (net)</i>	71%	91%	56%
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	23%	9%	35%

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



Press Release – continued –

f. I would be personally uncomfortable if I had to teach about climate change

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Strongly agree	6%	7%	6%
Somewhat agree	15%	8%	21%
Somewhat disagree	26%	19%	31%
Strongly disagree	47%	64%	33%
Don't know	6%	2%	8%
<i>Agree (net)</i>	21%	15%	27%
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	73%	83%	65%

g. I worry about parent complaints when it comes to teaching climate change

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Strongly agree	8%	11%	6%
Somewhat agree	21%	19%	23%
Somewhat disagree	31%	29%	34%
Strongly disagree	33%	38%	28%
Don't know	7%	3%	10%
<i>Agree (net)</i>	29%	30%	29%
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	64%	67%	62%

16. How many years have you taught in K-12 education?

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
1 – 9 years	44%	51%	37%
10 – 19 years	31%	25%	37%
20 – 29 years	16%	14%	16%
30+ years	7%	8%	9%
<i>Mean</i>	<i>12.7</i>	<i>12.1</i>	<i>13.5</i>

17. Is the school where you do most of your teaching... (Select one)

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Public	84%	81%	86%
Private - Parochial	6%	6%	5%
Private - Non-parochial	5%	5%	5%
Charter	5%	8%	3%

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



Press Release – continued –

18. What subject(s) do you principally teach? (Select one)

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
Elementary/all subjects	26%	30%	23%
Science, technology, engineering or math	20%	23%	18%
Special Education/all subjects	14%	11%	16%
English	13%	13%	13%
History, civics, or other social sciences	9%	9%	9%
Arts or music	7%	5%	8%
Foreign language	3%	2%	3%
Athletics or physical education	2%	1%	3%
Other	7%	5%	7%

19. What state is your school in:

20. Do you belong to a teachers' union? (Select one)

	Total	Teaches Climate Change	Does Not Teach Climate Change
No	47%	36%	56%
Yes	46%	55%	40%
Don't know	2%	3%	2%
Prefer not to say	4%	6%	2%

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



Press Release – continued –

About the Study

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of NPR between March 21-25, 2019. For the survey, a sample of 505 teachers 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii were interviewed online in English. The sample includes 207 teachers who teach climate change to their students and 281 teachers who do not teach climate change to their students.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos' online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Ampario Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing a sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2016 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 5.0 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=505, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-6.5 percentage points).

The poll also has a credibility interval plus or minus 7.8 percentage points for teachers who teach climate change to their students, and 6.7 percentage points for teachers who do not teach climate change to their students.

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



Press Release – continued –

About Ipsos Public Affairs

Ipsos Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research practice made up of seasoned professionals. We conduct strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of American and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research, but elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research.

Ipsos has media partnerships with the most prestigious news organizations around the world. Through our media partnerships, Ipsos Public Affairs is a leading source of intelligent information for businesses and professionals in the U.S., Canada, the UK, and internationally. Ipsos Public Affairs is a member of the Ipsos Group, a leading global survey-based market research company. We provide boutique-style customer service and work closely with our clients, while also undertaking global research.

About Ipsos

Ipsos is an independent market research company controlled and managed by research professionals. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has grown into a worldwide research group with a strong presence in all key markets. Ipsos ranks fourth in the global research industry.

With offices in 88 countries, Ipsos delivers insightful expertise across five research specializations: brand, advertising and media; customer loyalty; marketing; public affairs research; and survey management.

Ipsos researchers assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media and they measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,749.5 million in 2018.

GAME CHANGERS

« Game Changers » is the Ipsos signature.

At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society.
We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions.
We deliver with security, speed, simplicity and substance. We are Game Changers.

Ipsos is listed on Eurolist – NYSE-Euronext.
The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index
and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP
www.ipsos.com

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025