

VERMONT EDUCATION & ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

2020 SURVEY RESULTS

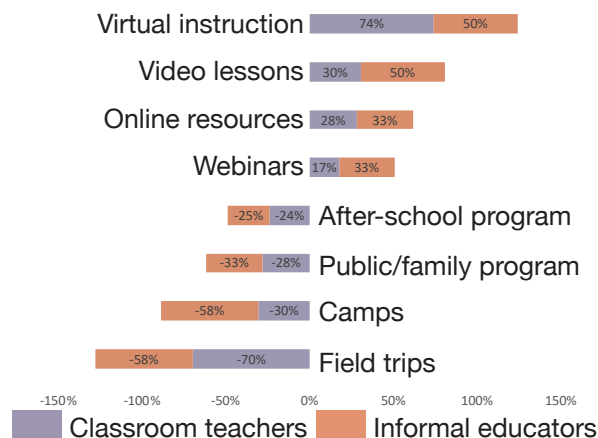
The Vermont Education & Environment Network is a **coalition** of dozens of organizations and individuals **promoting environmental education** in Vermont. A survey was conducted of Network members to understand how the needs of classroom teachers and informal educators have changed during the 2020-21 Academic Year and to respond to those needs.

2020-21 Academic Year

In response to COVID-19, many K-12 classrooms shifted to virtual learning formats and must adhere to social distancing guidelines when in person. As a result, teachers are using outdoor learning in a greater capacity this year. However, many teachers need support to effectively use natural spaces and outdoor education pedagogy. Additionally, informal outdoor educators are unable to provide school groups with their traditional offerings of place-based field trips. To understand the needs of educators, VEEN conducted a survey of network members to prioritize services and support for classroom teachers and informal educators.

Educational Methods and Activities Have Changed

Percent Change in Activities



Classroom teachers and informal educators are offering more computer-based learning activities than is typical, including virtual instruction, videos, webinars, and online activities. Health guidelines are also limiting many commonly offered opportunities this year. Field trips have the greatest loss, but other environmental education programs have also been reduced. Many of the programs that are not being offered as normal are outside of regular educational classes such as after-school programs, public events, and camps.

Survey Response and Actions

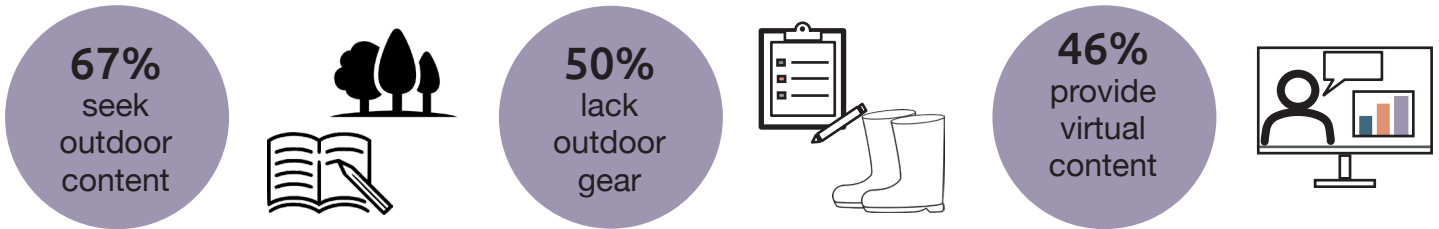
The Vermont Education & Environment Network board used the survey results to identify resources and training opportunities to provide support and resources for formal and informal educators, including:

- Webinars to help educators from around the state **connect** with each other and exchange ideas
- Professional learning to support **outdoor teaching**
- **Technology use** and online teaching skills development
- Youth **outdoor clothing drive** for winter outdoor learning support
- VEEN website to serve as a portal & clearinghouse for online learning and outdoor teaching resources
- Increase reach and services for classroom teachers and informal educators across Vermont



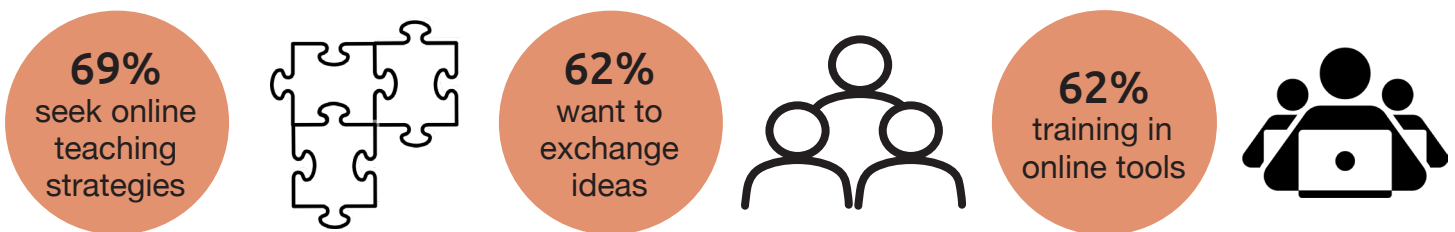
Classroom Teacher Needs

Classroom teachers are modifying their teaching methods and curricula to fit the altered schedules, reduced class sizes, and an increase in outdoor instruction. To make this successful, they have a need for **online resources**, **field equipment** for outdoor experiences, and **outdoor spaces** to take students near their schools.



Informal Educator Needs

In response to the necessary changes in 2020, informal educators are altering their activities and materials to provide environmental education through **online materials**. To successfully provide classroom teachers with online learning opportunities, informal educators seek training and skills development in developing online materials and techniques. Informal educators would like opportunities to gain new skills and develop a **community** with educators.



Respondents

A total of **59 people responded** to the survey, which was conducted in August and September 2020. **Classroom teachers** (46) and **informal educators** (13) were the target audience of the survey, but many people served in other roles in the education system including community partner, parent, school administrator, and volunteer.

The majority of respondents teach in Chittenden County; nine additional counties were represented by either classroom teachers, informal educators, or both. Three informal educators from one organization are able to provide services statewide.

