

SB 854 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 3/9, 3/30

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires school districts to develop written plan establishing climate change instructional program for students in kindergarten through grade 12 by June 1, 2026. Requires school districts to invite representatives from federally recognized Indian tribes in Oregon to review and provide feedback on plan. Requires school districts to submit plan to Oregon Department of Education (ODE) for approval. Requires school districts to review and submit plan to ODE for approval every seven years. Establishes minimum standards for instruction provided under program. Requires school districts to offer instructional program no later than 2026-2027 school year. Requires ODE to develop and adopt model plan in consultation with other state agencies and stakeholders, to develop academic content standards, and to approve and make available list of resources and materials that meet academic content standards. Requires Superintendent of Public Instruction to withhold distributions from Student Investment Account from school districts that fail to develop and implement climate change instructional program. Adds requirement that career and technical education funding from High School Graduation and College and Career Readiness Fund be spent on programs that support climate-focused sustainability career pathways.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Student investment in and anxiety about climate change
- Integrating climate change across curriculum and grade levels
- Time and resources to teach new standards

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces the measure. Requires education service districts to develop model climate change instructional framework. Specifies requirements for model instructional framework, including seeking feedback from one or more federally recognized Indian tribes and from local diverse groups and organizations. Requires education service district to submit written summary of model instructional framework to Oregon Department of Education (ODE) for review. Requires education service district to review model instructional framework every seven years and submit findings to ODE for review. Requires school district boards to develop climate change instructional framework. Requires school district boards to submit written summary of instructional framework to ODE for review. Requires school district boards to review instructional framework every seven years and submit findings to ODE for review. Requires ODE to develop and adopt model climate change instructional framework, to develop academic content standards and training materials for climate change instructional program, and to approve and make available list of resources and materials that meet academic content standards. Specifies requirements for climate change instructional framework. Requires ODE to establish academic content standards by June 30, 2027. Requires education service district to develop model climate change instructional framework by June 1, 2030. Requires school district board to begin implementing climate change instruction in 2032-2033 school year. Permits ODE to award grants from Student Investment Account to meet climate change instructional framework requirements. Adds requirement that career and technical education funding from High School Graduation and College and Career Readiness Fund be spent on programs that support climate-focused sustainability career pathways.

BACKGROUND:

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In 2022, at least 11 states introduced bills on climate change instruction, including California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Connecticut law currently requires the Connecticut State Board of Education to make curriculum materials available on a variety of subject matters, including climate change curricula consistent with Next Generation Science Standards. Connecticut's [House Bill 5285 \(2022\)](#) would have required, rather than just permitted, schools to include the climate change curriculum provided by the Connecticut State Board of Education in their program of instruction. In Maine, [House Paper 1409 \(2022\)](#) would have established a pilot program to provide grants for educators to receive professional development on climate science, and for the development of interdisciplinary climate education courses. In Rhode Island, [House Bill 7275 \(2022\)](#) would have required the Rhode Island Department of Education to develop a set of environmental, climate, and sustainability principles and concepts to be integrated into science, civics, and social studies courses for kindergarten through grade 12. In Wisconsin, [Senate Bill 761 \(2021\)](#) would have permitted the state superintendent of public instruction to adopt model academic standards related to climate change, and to provide grants and resources to school districts for climate change instruction. However, none of this legislation was enacted.

Senate Bill 854 requires school districts to develop and implement a climate change instructional program by the 2026-2027 school year, and requires the Oregon Department of Education to develop a model plan, content standards, and resources for implementing those programs. The bill also withholds Student Investment Account distributions from school districts that fail to develop and implement such a program.