

Oregon Council for the Social Studies
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March 12, 2025

Oregon House and Senate Education Committees
% Maia Daniel
900 Court Street Northeast
Salem, Oregon 97301



Dear Education Committee Members and Oregon Legislators,

On behalf of the Oregon Council for the Social Studies, and in echo of our colleagues at Oregon Science Teachers Association, we are writing to express support for House Bill 3365, which seeks to amend ORS 329.045, an Oregon public law on Common Curriculum Goals, by expanding and integrating climate resilience instruction across all K-12 core subject areas (language arts, sciences, mathematics, social studies, health, physical education, and the arts). This multidisciplinary approach fosters inquiry, critical thinking, and cultural understanding while helping students make connections between the science of climate change and its far-reaching social, economic, and civic implications. HB 3365 articulates pathways for integrating climate literacy into academic content standards that are already reviewed and revised regularly by the State Board of Education and the Oregon Department of Education, with place-based, age-appropriate, solution-oriented guidelines developed within Oregon and nationally.

Currently, a handful of Social Science standards introduce climate change by covering its causes and impacts. However, due to the breadth of Social Science standards that must be addressed, instruction is sometimes limited in scope and unable to explore the full range of interdisciplinary connections that climate change entails. A comprehensive climate change education framework would extend students' understanding of the civic, social, economic, and policy implications of climate change while reinforcing essential disciplinary practices such as chronological reasoning, evaluating diverse perspectives, and assessing systemic inequalities. In many of our elementary classrooms across the state, there is no time for Social Science at all, due to a focus on reading, writing, and math. By embedding climate literacy across subject areas, students can develop a deeper understanding of their interdependence with the world and the skills to engage in informed civic action, policy advocacy, and innovative solutions that address systemic injustices related to climate impacts.

Ensuring that all Oregon students learn about climate change across multiple subjects and viewpoints is essential for preparing them to address local and global challenges. A well-rounded climate literacy education fosters critical thinking and equips students to analyze how climate change affects their communities, industries, and daily lives. Social science instruction in digital citizenship, for example, prepares students to critically evaluate climate misinformation, distinguish between fact and opinion, and develop well-reasoned arguments regarding climate policy. Understanding interdependence with nature and the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of climate change throughout their education will enable students to make informed decisions as future leaders and workforce members.

“Green” Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways are particularly crucial in providing students with hands-on learning experiences that align with emerging industries in clean energy, sustainability, and climate resilience. These pathways not only prepare students for high-demand careers but also support Oregon’s commitment to economic growth and environmental stewardship. By integrating climate education into CTE programs, we ensure that the next generation is equipped with the technical expertise and problem-solving skills necessary for building a resilient and sustainable society.

HB 3365 is an investment in Oregon’s future. OCSS strongly supports HB 3365, which aligns with NOAA's Climate Literacy Guide and Oregon Department of Education’s Essential Disciplinary Practices for Social Science to provide students with inquiry-based, solution-focused learning. It prepares students not only to understand climate science but also to engage in civic and economic solutions that will sustain our state’s industries and ecosystems for generations to come. We urge you to support this bill and uphold Oregon’s commitment to education, resilience, and responsible stewardship.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Oregon’s future. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to seeing HB 3365 advance through the legislative process.

Sincerely,
Oregon Council for the Social Studies (OCSS)
Board of Directors