

Dear Chair Neron and Members of the House Education Committee,

I write this letter in strong support for Oregon Climate Education House Bill 3365. As a mom, aunt, and teacher, I have a passionate and personal investment in future generations. I have been a social studies and Spanish teacher for almost 25 years, currently working at Lake Oswego High School. I have taken it as my responsibility to educate myself in the natural science and social science of climate change so that I can better understand and convey climate solutions. I want to provide hope, agency, and opportunities for action in the face of what otherwise could feel overwhelming to young people. The science says we have the power to create a better future.

The past two years my high school history students have explored cross-sector climate solutions and climate scenarios using the [En-Roads simulator](#). Students watch indicators rise and fall – global greenhouse gas emissions, global average temperature through 2100 – based on a series of levers that they can manipulate (carbon pricing, energy sources, etc.). One student last week reflected afterward: “The fact that we can get the temperature down from around 3 or 4 degrees (Celsius by 2100)...to 1.5 degrees only gives me hope...I believe that it would take a lot of work and determination, but it would be possible to reduce climate change.” Last year I had students ask, “Why haven’t we learned this sooner?” and another had an ah-ha: “Climate education is a climate solution!” Learning about the power of humans—all of us—to shape the future was activating his imagination and critical thinking.

Although approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of Oregonians recognize that global warming is happening and feel it should be taught in schools, fewer than half say they discuss global warming at least occasionally (Yale Climate Communications, 2023). Climate Scientist Katherine Hayhoe argues that the most important thing we can do to fight climate change is talk about it (Ted Talk, 2018). [UNESCO](#) reports “Climate change education helps people understand and address the impacts of the climate crisis, empowering them with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to act as agents of change.” HB 3365 offers equitable access to climate education and thus climate resilience, by suggesting interdisciplinary, age-appropriate connections tethered to core subject area standards during the normally scheduled updating process. The goal is not to be additive, prescriptive, or burdensome for teachers, but rather provide the

opportunity and spark the potential for making those connections to the teaching and learning they are already doing. This offers to enhance learning by making it more interesting and engaging. Students want to learn what is relevant in their lives, and climate change is absolutely relevant.

Many of my students understand the basic science of global warming. They have a harder time understanding how our society, everyday systems and behaviors, collectively contribute to global warming. And most importantly, they don't understand climate solutions in a more holistic way. We are teaching in our siloed disciplines and departments without making transparent for students interdisciplinary connections. Climate change is an amazing opportunity to do just that. If we are not being transparent about problems and solutions, and how our society currently functions, how it is and will continue to change and what we need to change, we will continue along the same trajectory. Simply integrating more about the way that humans are interdependent and interconnected with the natural world will help create a more sustainable future.

I have devoted much of my time outside of the classroom toward this mission. I work with Green Team students and local organizations toward sustainability efforts in our school community. I am a steering committee member of Oregon Educators for Climate Education and a contributor to the bill. I served three years on the Oregon Green Schools Board. I also try to make climate education accessible to educators in our state through my work with SubjectToClimate and the Oregon Climate Education Hub, a free resource to easily integrate climate learning into classrooms. I also serve as an advisory board member of Future Climate Collective, a non-profit that started in my community of Lake Oswego.

While some teachers may more easily notice and already intentionally integrate climate change and sustainability themes or topics into their classes, for others they may not make natural connections to their own subject area or grade level. And this bill is not seeking to integrate climate change into everything. This is just saying that we need to make those connections and opportunities more apparent so that teachers see opportunities and become conveyors of those connections to their students. A throughline of exposure to nature and hands-on learning outdoors as kids might look like identifying environmental policies or energy solutions as adolescents to protect that same ecosystem they grew to love in school as kids.

In my classroom, we look at the economics of climate change when we study the Industrial Revolution, as well as its social and environmental consequences. We look at bi-partisan solutions such as the 2021-2022 Inflation Reduction Act. We look at the challenges facing red and blue parts of our state and a common desire for good livelihoods, healthy communities, and a better future for our children and grandchildren. We have a responsibility to use the tools at our disposal. As my student said, it will take work and determination, but I know it is worth it.