

**Dear Chair Frederic, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Committee on Education,**

My name is Darin Henry, and I served as a Campus Supervisor at Sheldon High School in Eugene for 26 years. During 12 of those years, I was also the faculty advisor for the student-led Environmental Club. I write today in strong support of HB 3365, a bill that reflects the heartfelt calls of Oregon students who are asking for an education that prepares them not just academically, but for the reality of their future.

Our club began modestly, focusing on campus recycling. The students worked hard—recycling paper, plastics, metal, and electronics. Over time, they realized they were simply doing the work for everyone else. They tried to teach the “how” of recycling with presentations, signage, and assemblies, but the community’s habits didn’t change. What became clear to them was that people didn’t understand *why* recycling mattered. And without that understanding, the message didn’t stick.

This realization set off a shift. Inspired by local climate activist Kelsey Juliana and her federal court case, our club refocused entirely on climate change. We invited guest speakers, filled gymnasiums, and welcomed scientists, educators—even Kelsey herself. The club’s name changed to the Sheldon Climate Club, and so did its impact. Attendance doubled. Students filled the hallways with educational posters, including carbon data timelines stretching back 100,000 years. The tone became urgent.

Students began connecting the dots: if climate change is going to be solved, it must be understood as the deeply interdisciplinary issue it is. They saw that covering climate change only in science class isolated the problem—making it seem abstract, unmanageable, and scary. Students expressed feeling anxious and depressed because they could identify the threat, but didn’t feel empowered to respond. But when we discussed climate change across disciplines—economics, literature, civics, history, the arts—they began to see it as something solvable. They felt motivated, purposeful, and hopeful.

Then something remarkable happened. In 2019, our students were asked to host the Eugene 4J School District’s first climate summit. Students from all four high schools opened the event with a unified request: *“Teach us about climate change in as many subjects as possible.”* Teachers, administrators, school board members, and even the superintendent attended. The response was inspiring. Teachers across grades and disciplines began sharing ideas and building networks.

That work continued even through the pandemic. Students met online, recorded a video to amplify their message, and shared it with the Oregon Department of Education, who enthusiastically supported their request—though they lacked the mechanism to implement it.

That’s when a group of dedicated teachers, moved by the students’ clarity and urgency, began drafting legislation. After an initial, overly ambitious proposal stalled, it was refined into HB 3365—a thoughtful, practical, and inclusive approach that empowers teachers to teach climate

change across subjects at their own discretion using interdisciplinary approaches, without mandates or extra workload.

HB 3365 doesn't dictate curriculum. It simply ensures that the academic standards for core subjects allow room to meaningfully include the causes, effects, and solutions to climate change. This approach allows students to engage with climate issues in ways that make sense for them—whether they're studying math, art, literature, or social studies.

When students understand a problem—truly understand it—they are less afraid of it. It becomes something to face, not flee from. But when a problem is opaque and only ever mentioned in the context of worst-case scenarios, it feels dangerous, hopeless, and insurmountable. That kind of fear can shut students down, draining their motivation and mental health. HB 3365 changes that narrative. It replaces fear with agency, despair with determination, and isolation with collective purpose.

By passing this bill, Oregon can lead the nation in answering students' call for an education that meets the moment. Please vote yes on HB 3365.

Sincerely,

Darin Henry

Former Campus Supervisor and Environmental/Climate Club Advisor

Sheldon High School, Eugene, Oregon