

## Senate Education Committee

### HB 3365 - An Opportunity for Bipartisan Education Support

Thank you Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber and members of the Senate Education Committee for welcoming us to speak with you today. My name is Sarah Kirby and I have been a secondary math, science and CTE teacher in Oregon for more than 25 years. I'm not a lobbyist or part of a special interest group—I'm a teacher speaking on behalf of Oregon's students and educators in support of House Bill 3365, which calls for comprehensive climate education in our schools.

This bill is not about adding new burdens to teachers, it's about supporting teachers—especially when students ask to learn about climate change or when teachers choose to address its local impacts. It doesn't impose a one-size-fits-all curriculum but promotes **regionally relevant, age-appropriate learning opportunities that reflect the realities that Oregon's students and communities face.**

Some may claim this is an "unfunded mandate," but that's not accurate. Climate literacy principles can be integrated into the existing standards revision process managed by the Oregon Department of Education. This well-established, 7-year cycle—already in place for all subject areas—includes input from educators and content specialists, review and approval by the State Board, public comment periods, instructional material updates, and ongoing, aligned professional development. It requires no **new** systems and no **added on** costs.

Others may argue climate change is already in the science standards. As a science teacher, I can tell you that the science alone is not enough. Students don't just want to understand *what* is happening—they want to know *what to do* about it. Through policy, civic engagement, indigenous knowledge, math, statistics, and career pathways, we can empower students to envision and lead local, hopeful solutions.

This bill is about **ensuring Oregon's** students have the **critical thinking and problem-solving skills to engage with issues that directly affect their families, their neighborhoods, and their future.** Learning about climate change doesn't replace reading, writing, or math—it strengthens them. When students analyze climate data, write persuasive arguments, and read about real-world challenges and solutions, they're building essential academic skills through relevant, engaging content.

Whether in our **forests, farmlands, fisheries, or urban centers**, students see the changes happening around them.

I urge you to support HB3365 to ensure **Oregon's students can learn about, engage with, and contribute to the future of the places they love.**

Thank you for your time and leadership.

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*Below are responses to Questions Raised in the House Education Committee*

- **Is the intent of this bill to establish climate and sustainability standards in all subjects at all grade levels?** No. The intent of the Bill is to include climate and sustainability standards into the grade level and content standards where it makes sense to do so. A good example to consider is in Mathematics. It would make sense to incorporate opportunities to teach about climate change as an example in 8th grade **Data Reasoning** standards (Formulate Statistical Investigative Questions, Collect and Consider Data, Analyze, summarize, and describe data, Interpret data and answer investigative questions), but not under **Geometric Reasoning and Measurement** (Understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem, Solve mathematical problems in authentic contexts involving volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres.)

This bill does not suggest an “all climate, all the time”. It provides language to enable the content area specialists and the teacher teams they convene as part of the Department of Education standards adoption process to discuss and determine where it could best be integrated into their subject area and how. There are frequent shifts in standards foci that are rolled into this process, and the changes this bill calls for would be easily digested into that process. This is not a curriculum adoption, or a one-size fits all approach. It is an integration of climate and sustainability principles where relevant and appropriate, determined by educators and education specialists.

- **Is the State Board of Education empowered to determine how and where to integrate climate and sustainability standards?** Yes. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has very clear processes around the standards adoption process, which includes review, discussion and determination of language by subject area specialists, led by ODE content area specialists. There is built-in, structured time and opportunity for public comment followed by the State Board of Education review and approval process.
- **At the moment, Oregon's standards already include language around climate and sustainability in some of the Social Studies, Health and Science standards. Is this kind of integration that you envision, or are you asking for something more sweeping?** The following are exactly the kind of examples that this bill is proposing. These examples were determined and drafted by social studies, health and science specialists as part of the Oregon standards adoption process:
  - **4<sup>th</sup> grade social studies:** Describe how technological developments, societal decisions, and personal practices affect Oregon's sustainability (dams, wind turbines, climate change and variability, transportation systems, etc.).

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- **8<sup>th</sup> grade health:** Examine the relationship between environmental conditions, including air and water quality and climate change, on personal and community health outcomes.
- **2nd grade science:** Earth's systems - Represent data in tables and graphical displays to describe typical weather conditions expected during a particular season.^ [Clarification Statement: Examples of data at this grade level could include average temperature, precipitation, and wind direction.]
  - Elevated opportunities for **climate change education** across the K-12 standards. A caret or up arrow (^) was added to those standards that have proximal connections to climate change and the disciplinary core ideas: Earth's Systems and Earth and Human Activity. These standards were identified by utilizing the [research analysis](#) conducted by MADE CLEAR through a National Science Foundation Grant that could further support climate change education.

*\*This last point is in direct response to the Opposition statements that were submitted by the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) and the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) representatives on 3/12 during the House Education Committee hearings.*

- **Is this another unfunded mandate? Will school districts be on the hook financially for more professional learning around new standards?** No. As part of the existing, cyclical standards review process, and the subsequent curriculum review and adoption process, districts already review curriculum to align with changes in standards and in collaboration with Education Service Districts, Regional Education Networks and STEM Hubs, provide ongoing professional learning opportunities to improve and adapt teaching and learning outcomes. Where precise alignment does not exist, Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Open Learning often promote the creation of Open Educational Resources (OERs). At times, ODE and other entities have been able to fund teacher creation of OERs. Groups, such as Oregon Educators for Climate Education, Subject to Climate, Oregon Education Association, Center for Geography Education in Oregon, Oregon Council for the Social Studies, and Oregon Science Teachers Association, have expressed ongoing support to help fund and grow the base of OERs available. Many materials already exist, including within the portfolios of Tribal History | Shared History and Oregon Tribe-specific resources, that could be used as-is or with something as simple as the addition of an additional reflection question. In sum, there are existing structures and systems, oriented around ever-changing instructional strategies, best practices in improving curriculum design, evolving content knowledge, improvement in pedagogical approaches, etc. Including climate and sustainability principles could be simply integrated as part of many new and/or existing curriculum mandates: Social Emotional Learning (hope and solution-oriented lessons), Civics (climate policy and environmental law), Tribal History Shared History (seasonal observations in nature,

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Traditional Ecological Knowledge systems), Computer Science (computer modeling of earth's systems, large data sets, GIS - Geographic Information Systems), Math's Two+1 (data reasoning, mathematical modeling, statistics), CTE (clean energy workforce opportunities, regenerative farming practices, sustainable forestry practices, energy efficiency in construction and design) etc.

This bill is not asking for more or new curriculum mandates. It merely suggests ways that these critical principals can be, and need to be, incorporated into student learning in order to prepare students for the world they will inherit.