

May 8, 2025

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your steadfast dedication to Oregon's children, families, and communities. We deeply appreciate your ongoing efforts.

We are writing to enthusiastically echo the Oregon Education Association's (OEA) strong support for House Bill 3365A. Furthermore, we wish to offer additional perspective on points raised by our esteemed colleagues at COSA.

We are proud to underscore that climate change education has become a significant and growing priority for the OEA in recent years. Building upon the passionate advocacy of Oregon students, educators across the state overwhelmingly support HB 3365. Representing over 44,000 educators, the OEA has already voiced its support for this crucial legislation (tinyurl.com/oedas25). This April alone, the OEA has taken decisive steps to further the integration of climate change education for all Oregon students.

At our recent annual Representative Assembly, OEA delegates, representing every corner of our state, approved three pivotal statewide initiatives: 1) advocating for comprehensive and interdisciplinary climate change education from pre-K through higher education, thoughtfully adapted to the unique context of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, to empower students for a just and sustainable future (tinyurl.com/oea25); 2) proactively including the "impacts of climate change" as a critical school community safety concern within our legislative objectives, recognizing the urgent need for protective measures (tinyurl.com/oeaj25); and 3) strategically allocating resources for enhanced communication and grant writing to bolster professional learning and foster communities of practice focused on place-based climate change connections across all disciplines, with particular attention to the integration of Tribal History | Shared History and Tribe-specific educational resources (tinyurl.com/oean25). It is also important to note the broad coalition of student, community, and educator groups who testified in favor of HB 3365 during its House hearing (tinyurl.com/te3365), including the Oregon Science Teachers Association (tinyurl.com/osta25) and the Oregon Council for the Social Studies (tinyurl.com/25ocss). This widespread support aligns with the guidance of leading international and national organizations such as the United Nations (tinyurl.com/24ccun) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (tinyurl.com/24noaa), as well as respected institutions like the Brookings and Aspen Institutes.

Our COSA colleagues rightly point out the occasional inclusion of climate change or related topics within existing standards. However, particularly in our current climate of political uncertainty, **codifying climate change as a protected and essential area of instruction appears to be a prudent and necessary step.** This bill presents a valuable opportunity for the State Board of Education, under the thoughtful oversight of the Legislature, to strategically integrate a long-term climate change perspective into the ongoing evolution of educational standards. This integration would naturally occur alongside other vital concepts, such as those within Tribal History | Shared History, that the Board is responsible for considering. In our support for this teacher-led and student-driven movement to establish specific standards for climate change and related issues, we have engaged in conversations with educators and administrators statewide. We consistently heard from teachers expressing their desire to teach about climate change more frequently but voiced concerns about potential community pushback and a perceived lack of administrative support in affirming it as a protected topic within the curriculum. Similarly, many administrators shared anxieties about potential repercussions for prioritizing climate change instruction. We believe there is a significant opportunity before this esteemed committee and the Legislature to address a challenge that students, teachers, and engaged community members have diligently brought to your attention for years.

There is another constructive interpretation of the factual information shared by our COSA colleagues: **the current, limited integration of climate change topics within health, science, and social science standards has been achieved without additional cost. This suggests that further, more intentional integration could also be achieved efficiently.** Building upon the existing foundation, acknowledging the progress our state has already made in climate change education, and strategically leveraging this as a springboard for a more comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to the impact of our educational system on current and future generations appears to be a sound strategy that serves the public's best interests.

Furthermore, regarding our COSA colleagues' reference to "sufficient instruction," we believe it is important to clarify that **ensuring the presence of well-developed standards for "sufficient instruction" on *any* topic already falls within the established purview of the State Board of Education.** HB 3365A does not grant any new powers or authority to the State Board. Instead, it provides clear guidance and direction to ensure that climate change receives the specific and necessary attention it warrants. This implicitly acknowledges the public benefit of having more robust climate change-related standards than currently exist and ensuring that this remains a protected area of learning for generations of students.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of your support for HB 3365A.

Respectfully,

Jenoge Khatter, D. Ed. & Sarah Kirby
Co-Chairs
OEA Climate Education Committee