
THIRD READING

Bill No: SB 1048
Author: Becker (D), et al.
Amended: 4/6/26
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 4/8/26
AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Gonzalez, Reyes

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

SUBJECT: State Seal of Climate Literacy

SOURCE: California State PTA
Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action
Ten Strands
UndauntedK12

DIGEST: This bill (1) establishes the voluntary State Seal of Climate Literacy (SSCL) to be affixed to the diploma of qualifying high school graduates and requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to recommend criteria under which participating local educational agencies (LEA) may award said seal to qualified students; (2) requires participating LEAs to collect and annually submit to the California Department of Education (CDE) specified data related to SSCL participation.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Office of Education and the Environment (OEE) in the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) and requires the OEE to implement a statewide environmental education program. (Public Resources Code (PRC) § 71300)

- 2) Requires the OEE, under the direction of CalRecycle and in cooperation with the CDE and the State Board of Education (SBE), to develop and implement a unified education strategy of the environment for elementary and secondary schools, as specified. (PRC § 71300)
- 3) Requires the CDE and SBE, in cooperation with CalRecycle, to develop and implement, to the extent feasible, a teacher training and implementation plan that guides the phased implementation of the unified education strategy in elementary, middle, and high school programs, for the education of pupils, faculty, and administrators on the importance of integrating environmental concepts and programs in schools. (PRC § 71300)
- 4) Establishes the voluntary State Seal of Civic Engagement (SSCE), affixed to the diploma or transcript of an eligible student, to encourage, and create pathways for, students in elementary and secondary schools to become civically engaged in democratic governmental institutions at the local, state, and national levels. (Education Code (EC) § 51475)
- 5) Requires the SPI, in developing criteria for the SSCE, to incorporate the Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning, and to consult with a diverse group of credentialed, current classroom teachers who teach the subject of history-social science, including government, in secondary schools. Requires the SPI, on or before January 1, 2020, to recommend to the SBE criteria for awarding a SSCE to students, as specified. Requires the SBE, on or before January 31, 2021, to adopt, reject, or modify the SSCE criteria recommended by the SPI. (EC § 51470 et seq.)

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the voluntary SSCL for the purpose of giving high school pupils personal agency to help them and their communities understand and adapt to the effects of climate change.
- 2) Requires the SPI, on or before March 15, 2027, to recommend to the SBE criteria for awarding the SSCL to pupils who have demonstrated mastery in climate literacy disciplines, green skills or technical green skills, and any and all other best practices for climate literacy. Requires the SPI to consider, in the development of criteria, the following:
 - a) Successful completion of at least two approved courses in the area of climate literacy, as specified.

- b) Successful completion and presentation of a climate literacy final experiential learning project as specified.
- 3) Requires the SPI to also recommend the criteria necessary for a participating LEA to additionally award to eligible pupils with an Industry and/or Higher Education Distinction, as specified.
 - 4) Requires the SPI to ensure, to the greatest extent feasible, that the criteria developed pursuant to 2) and 3) above adhere to all of the following:
 - a) Provides all pupils with an opportunity to earn the SSCL.
 - b) Recognizes pupil excellence and outstanding achievement.
 - c) Is not based primarily on pupil achievement that is already recognized through grades or other standard measures of pupil achievement.
 - d) Results in a seal that confers a benefit to pupils beyond high school.
 - 5) Requires the SBE, on or before May 1, 2027, to adopt, or adopt with modifications, the SSCL criteria recommended by the SPI.
 - 6) Requires the SPI to do all of the following:
 - a) Prepare and deliver to participating LEAs, an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of the pupil indicating that the pupil has been awarded an SSCL by the SPI.
 - b) Provide other information the SPI deems necessary for LEAs to successfully participate in awarding the SSCL to pupils.
 - c) Provide information to pupils who earn a SSCL about post secondary opportunities and career pathways that leverage the knowledge and skills that pupils develop through earning the SSCL.
 - 7) Requires a participating LEA, after the SBE adopts criteria for the SSCL, to do the following:
 - a) Maintain appropriate records in order to identify pupils who have earned an SSCL.
 - b) Affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma or transcript of each pupil who earns an SSCL.

- c) Provide information to pupils about available options and supports, including, but not limited to, approved courses, experiential learning, or final projects that pupils may complete to meet the criteria to earn an SSCL.
 - d) Establish a process for determining if a pupil has met the criteria necessary to earn an SSCL.
 - e) On or before September 15, 2027, and on or before September 15 of each year thereafter, provide CDE with specified data.
- 8) Establishes several definitions pursuant to this bill.

Comments

Need for this bill. According to the author, “California has long led the nation in climate action. SB 1048 ensures we are also leading in climate education by preparing the next generation with the knowledge and real-world experience they need to meet the challenges of a changing climate.”

California’s Environmental Principles and Concepts. In 2003 and 2005, the Legislature passed AB 1548 (Pavley, Chapter 665, Statutes of 2003) and AB 1721 (Pavley, Chapter 581, Statutes of 2005), which ultimately established the OEE under CalRecycle to develop education principles for the environment for elementary and secondary school pupils. The resulting California Environmental Principles and Concepts (EP&Cs) are comprised of five environmental principles and 15 supporting concepts that highlight the deep relationship between humans and the natural world and serve as “big ideas” intended to inform standards-based instruction and fuel student inquiry. These EP&Cs have been integrated into several state curriculum frameworks for California public schools serving kindergarten through grade twelve, including the 2016 History and Social Science Framework, the 2016 Science Framework, and the 2019 Health Education Framework.

Equity in Access to Climate Literacy Opportunities. This bill borrows the model of SSCE to create the SSCL. Specifically, it requires the SPI to recommend to the SBE criteria that would allow LEAs to recognize students who have demonstrated mastery in climate literacy disciplines, green skills or technical green skills, and any and all other best practices for climate literacy. In the development of criteria, the bill requires the SPI to consider factors such as the completion of courses in the area of climate literacy and the completion and presentation of a climate literacy final experiential learning project, as specified.

While the SSCL is intended to serve as a voluntary program, its implementation relies heavily on an LEA's ability to leverage partnerships with state and local climate literacy nonprofits, as well as labor and private sector entities engaged in the green economy. There are certainly areas of the state that have an abundance of local entities that are engaged with LEAs and have the capacity to partner with schools to provide learning opportunities for students; however, without careful attention to expanded access, such opportunities cannot be guaranteed for all students across the state. As a result, the SSCL may have the unintended consequence of highlighting LEAs that have the means to provide an environment where students can meet eligibility criteria, and leaving students at LEAs without such means behind.

This bill requires the SPI, in the development of recommended criteria, to ensure that to the greatest extent feasible, the recommended criteria provides all pupils with an opportunity to earn the SSCL and results in a seal that confers a benefit to the pupil beyond high school. This bill also authorizes the SPI to work with nonprofit organizations in furtherance of these priorities and others.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 4/16/26)

California State PTA (co-source)

Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action (co-source)

Ten Strands (co-source)

UndauntedK12 (co-source)

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond

350 Bay Area Action

7th Generation Advisors

Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet

Adolfo Camarillo High School

American River Natural History Association dba Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Arc

Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education

Bay Tree Design

Bluesky Consulting

Burbank Eco Council

Cadman Cooking and Garden Education Program

California Academy of Sciences

California Outdoor Recreation Partnership

California State Parks Foundation
California Teachers Association
Camp Chrysalis
Camp Ocean Pines
Canopy
Center for Ecoliteracy
CFT
Children Now
Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation
Citizens' Climate Lobby San Mateo County Chapter
City and County of San Francisco
City of Mountain View
Climate Action Campaign of the Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Climate Action Pathways for Schools
Climate Justice Committee, Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley
Common Vision
Community for Natural Play Surfaces
Community Resources for Science
Crystal Cove Conservancy
Dfusion Inc.
Earthday.org
EdTrust-West
Elder Climate Action Northern California Chapter
Elders Climate Action Southern California Chapter
Environmental Education Collaborative
Environmental Nature Center
Equity Meets Design
Exploring New Horizons Outdoor Schools
Fremont Union High School District
Fresno Chaffee Zoo
Friends of the LA River
Friends of the Lost Coast
Green Schoolyards America
HED
Heirs to Our Oceans
iCrest Education Foundation
Inner City Bliss
Life Lab
Living Classroom
Los Angeles County Office of Education

Los Gatos Almaden Pollinator Garden
Master Gardener Association of San Diego County
Menlo Spark
National Marine Educators Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nurture Nature
Oakland Goes Outdoors
People, Food and Land Foundation
Petaluma City Schools
Pittsburg Unified School District
Plant-Based Advocates
Rialto Unified School District
Richmond Outdoors Coalition
Roots to Branches Education
Sacramento Splash
Samuel Lawrence Foundation
San Diego Pediatricians for Clean Air
San Francisco Climate Literacy Advocates
San Jose Conservation Corps & Charter School
SanDiego350
Santa Clara County Medical Association
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Steam Learning Institute
Strategic Energy Innovations
Sustainable Marin Schools
Sustainable Mill Valley
SustainConsulting, LLC
The Escondido Creek Conservancy
The Friends of Daley Ranch
Three Oaks Outdoor Science School, Inc.
Tomorrow's Talent
TreePeople
trubel&co
U.S. Green Building Council
UC Davis Center for Community and Citizen Science
United Teachers Los Angeles
Water Energy Education Alliance
Western Municipal Water District
YES Nature to Neighborhoods
Youth v. Oil

Three Individuals

OPPOSITION: (Verified 4/16/26)

None received

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4/21/26 16:19:37

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