
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 1048
Author: Becker (D), et al.
Amended: 8/12/26
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

SENATE FLOOR: 37-0, 5/19/26

AYES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NO VOTE RECORDED: Jones, Niello, Strickland

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: Passed, 8/24/26

SUBJECT: State Seal of Climate Literacy

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

DIGEST: This bill establishes the voluntary State Seal of Climate Literacy (SSCL), allowing local educational agencies (LEAs) to create pathways towards climate literacy disciplines and reward students who have demonstrated mastery. The bill also requires the Education Commissioner (Commissioner) and State Board of Education (SBE) to develop and adopt criteria for awarding the SSCL based on student coursework and experiential learning projects.

Assembly Amendments 1) extend the implementation timeline; 2) replace references to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) with the Commissioner; 3) specify that final experiential learning projects must be completed on a voluntary basis and be independent from student coursework; 4) remove provisions related to the Seal Distinctions; 5) remove LEA reporting requirements to align with policies of existing seals; and 6) emphasize equitable implementation wherever possible to ensure participation from diverse communities throughout the state.

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 Commissioner, on or before December 31, 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 Commissioner 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 Commissioner to ensure, to the greatest extent feasible, that the criteria developed pursuant to #2 above adhere to all of the following:
 - a) Provides all pupils in participating LEAs 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, signaling to employers and institutions of higher education the pupil's readiness to contribute to a sustainable and resilient future.
- 4) Requires the SBE, on or before January 31, 2029, to adopt or adopt with modifications, all SSCL criteria recommended by the Commissioner.
- 5) Requires the Commissioner 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 Commissioner.

- b) Provide other information the Commissioner deems necessary for LEAs to successfully participate in awarding the SSCL to pupils.
 - c) Provide information to pupils who earn a SSCL about postsecondary opportunities and career pathways that leverage the knowledge and skills that pupils develop through earning the SSCL.
- 6) Authorizes the CDE to partner with nonprofit organizations to conduct outreach and provide technical assistance to LEAs in awarding the SSCL to ensure broad participation from diverse communities throughout the state.
- 7) Requires a participating LEA, on or after the date that the SBE adopts SSCL criteria, to do the following:
- a) Maintain appropriate records in order to identify pupils who have earned a SSCL.
 - b) Affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma or transcript of each pupil who earns a 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 a SSCL.
 - d) Establish a process for determining if a pupil has met the criteria necessary to earn a SSCL.
- 8) Defines the following terms:
- a) “Climate literacy” means an understanding of the essential principles of the earth’s climate system, assessing scientifically credible climate information, learning to communicate about the climate in a meaningful manner, and making informed and responsible decisions regarding actions that may affect the climate.
 - b) “Climate literacy experiential learning provider” means a provider that facilitates a pupil’s final project, including, but not limited to, a school organization or club, local media outlet, business, nonprofit organization, or industry focused on green skills or technical green skills.
 - c) “Green jobs” or “green career” means occupations or employment positions that reduce harmful effects on the climate, adapt processes to minimize their effect on the climate, recognize and mitigate the disproportionate social

effects of climate change, support the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of communities, or contribute to the well-being and resilience of present and future generations.

- d) “Green skills” means the adaptable knowledge, abilities, values, and attitudes to live in, develop, and support an evolving, sustainable, and resource-efficient society.
- e) “Local educational agency” means a school district, county office of education, or charter school.
- f) “Technical green skills” means skills that fulfill the requirements of green jobs and that support the transition to a low-carbon sustainable economy.

Comments

Need for the 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.

This bill requires the Commissioner and the CDE to develop guidance, to the greatest extent feasible, 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 CDE to work with nonprofit organizations in furtherance of these priorities and others.

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

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) Minor, ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund costs to high schools to verify whether a student has demonstrated climate literacy as prescribed by the criteria to be set forth by the SBE pursuant to this bill.
- 2) Ongoing General Fund costs, likely minor, for CDE to send out additional seals authorized under this new designation.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/24/26)

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

Association of Nature Center Administrators
Bay Tree Design
Bluesky Consulting
Burbank Eco Council
Cadman Cooking and Garden Education Program
California Academy of Sciences
California Nurses for Environmental Health & Justice
California Outdoor Recreation Partnership
California State Parks Foundation
California Teachers Association
Camp Chrysalis
Camp Ocean Pines
Canopy
Center for Ecoliteracy
Center for Environmental Health
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
Grades of Green
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 Angeles County Sanitation Districts
Los Gatos Almaden Pollinator Garden
Master Gardener Association of San Diego County
Menlo Spark
Monterey Bay Aquarium Foundation
Mothers Out Front Silicon Valley
National Center for Science Education
National Marine Educators Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nurture Nature
Oakland Goes Outdoors
Palo Alto Unified School District
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 Clara Valley Open Space Authority
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
Utmost Atmos
Water Energy Education Alliance
Water Replenishment District of Southern California
Western Municipal Water District
YES Nature to Neighborhoods
Youth v. Oil
Three Individuals

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/24/26)

None received

Prepared by: Therresa Austin / ED. / (916) 651-4105
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**** **END** ****