



Date: March 9, 2023
To: Senate Education Committee
From: Parasa Chanramy, Coalition of Oregon School Administrators
Subject: Remarks regarding [Senate Bill 854](#)

Good Afternoon, Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

For the record, my name is Parasa Chanramy with the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators. First off, I want to thank all of the teachers and students who worked on this bill, and thank Senators Manning and Patterson for helping introduce this bill.

While we support the instruction of climate change education, we would like to register a few concerns regarding the current language of Senate Bill 854.

1. Alignment to Oregon's [current K-12 science learning standards](#)

For some context, the State Board of Education adopted the latest iteration of Oregon Science Standards in June of 2022, which represent K-12 learning expectations in science education for all students and are a foundational expectation of the Oregon Diploma.

While the specific language of the 2022 Oregon Science Standards remain essentially the same as the 2014 Oregon Science Standards, [one of the three areas that was updated was regarding climate change education](#).

In reviewing the current language of the bill, it is unclear whether the proposed climate change instructional program would be aligned with the current K-12 science learning standards.

Without clear alignment to the current standards - we worry that this could create confusion around the learning expectations that are already articulated in Oregon's Science Standards, and the ones that would be developed through this bill.

2. Timeline and added responsibilities without additional resourcing



We have some concerns about the timeline for implementation as well - in Senate Bill 854 - A school district must first offer a climate change instructional program that meets the requirements established under subsection (2) of this section no later than the 2026-2027 school year.

This means that a school district would only have four school years to implement the new program. We believe that more time and resources would be needed to: 1) develop any new standards; 2) create a new program and prepare materials; and 3) hire, train, and support district and school staff in delivering the new program.

To put this in perspective, when the Ethnic Studies bill passed in 2017; the standards were developed and adopted in 2021 - as part of Oregon's K-12 social science standards; while districts can start utilizing the updated standards now, implementation will be required in the 2026-27 school year.

3. Impact on Student Investment Account dollars

We are concerned with the provision in the bill that would allow the Department of Education to withhold Student Investment Account dollars if a school district fails to develop and implement a climate change instructional program as required in the bill.

Given the accelerated timeline, no new funding provided for implementation, and an unclear plan for how the Oregon Department of Education would be required to provide technical assistance to districts that need support, we believe this provision would negatively impact our ability to be able to provide consistent academic, mental, and behavioral health supports and services to students, especially for focal student populations like our students of color, students with disabilities, students who are emergent bilingual, students in foster care, and students who are homeless.

In closing, we support climate change education, however, we have some concerns around the bill's current language - particularly in regards to:

- Alignment with the latest iteration of Oregon's science standards;
- Timeline for implementation;
- Adding to district responsibilities without a guarantee for additional resources; and
- How the bill would impact current Student Investment Account dollars.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.