

Dear Chair Frederick and members of the Committee:

My name is Tami Darden, and I am a resident of Eugene and an educator, coordinator, and youth organizer. I am the Co-Director for a non-profit organization that coordinates environmental and climate action/justice education and action opportunities for youth across Oregon. Over the last decade in my profession, I have engaged with dozens of schools and teachers across the state, and thousands of students of all ages. I am writing today to urge you to support HB-3365, to create moderate, broad improvements to our educational standards that would integrate more comprehensive climate-based education into our schools.

Our organization exists in its current form specifically because of the lack of comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and consistent education relating to the climate crisis we are all facing. I repeatedly hear from teachers that there is no comprehensive or clear way for teachers to integrate climate education into their classrooms, and there is often a lack of support for adequate professional development in these areas. Students simply wonder why they aren't learning about such an important subject for more than a few lessons in a science class, when it is obvious to them that this is an issue that will affect their entire lives as they get older.

Based on my personal observations, there is a serious lack of awareness in our educational system about how these issues are affecting and will continue to affect our state in years to come. It's not simply a lack of understanding about the science of climate change—which is also evident—but also a lack of foresight and vision for how to prepare our youth for the challenges they will need to be addressing as future leaders of our state.

By providing guidelines in the form of standards revisions, which are already revised every 7 years for each core subject, this process can be thoughtfully integrated, with input from teachers across Oregon. Students need to learn how the climate crisis will affect their future, and it is our obligation to provide them with the necessary educational tools to work towards resilience and solutions. I urge you to consider the practical and reasonable improvements to our educational system that this bill outlines and make the right choice for moving Oregon towards educational preparedness to face the challenges of an undeniably changing climate.

Respectfully,

Tami Darden
Partners for Sustainable Schools
Our Future Student Leadership Network
Eugene, OR