

*Los Angeles Unified School District
Board of Education*



**Scott M. Schmerelson
Board Member, District 3**

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School Board Approves Transforming Teaching of Climate Change

Curriculum will 'meet the scale and urgency of the crisis'

Students will participate in more outdoor activities

The Board of Education unanimously approved today a Climate Literacy resolution, sponsored by Board Members Scott M. Schmerelson, and co-sponsored by Board Members Dr. George J. McKenna III and Jackie Goldberg. The resolution aims to enact a comprehensive Climate Literacy program for Los Angeles Unified schools in order to help address the escalating climate crisis that is increasingly endangering Southern California, our nation and our planet.

The resolution will also create a Climate Literacy Task Force to coordinate resources and support other districtwide efforts. Climate literacy also covers education about environmental justice, green jobs, and correcting misinformation. The resolution was developed over many months in partnership with the Climate Curricula Committee of the Los Angeles chapter, the Climate Reality Project (CRP-LA) founded by former Vice President Al Gore.

“With the years of natural disasters and severe environmental changes that we have already experienced, we are now facing a climate emergency,” said Board Member Schmerelson. “In order to see change, student leaders and educators must raise awareness and develop an action plan in our classrooms and our local communities. I authored this resolution to create a taskforce that will streamline and expand resources,

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as well as explore funding opportunities for a comprehensive climate literacy program that provides the necessary understanding about climate change and the necessary skills to help our students and educators become the leaders we need to protect our planet.”

“Climate literacy is essential as part of the curriculum for our students so they can make informed decisions that can improve the quality of life now and in the years to come,” said Interim Superintendent Megan K. Reilly. “Our goal is to expand on how we can all work together to green pathways and to develop the education of climate and climate change.”

“I am proud to co-sponsor Board Member Schmerelson’s resolution that will better prepare our students to become part of the solution to climate change,” said Board Member McKenna.

“Every reasonable person can look at the weather outside their own window or across the world and see it’s time for us to do everything possible to find climate solutions,” said Board Member Goldberg. “Incorporating science and sustainability themes, activities, and principles in the classroom empowers student leadership now and develops our much needed climate leaders of the future.”

“As a former science teacher, I recognize the urgency of action on climate change and need to ensure our students are educated about this threat and empowered to take immediate action,” said Board President Kelly Gonez. “We are taking steps today to integrate climate science into all of the core content areas and provide a well-rounded climate education.”

“I am proud to cosponsor this resolution and expand LA Unified’s efforts to provide more access to climate education, green spaces in school communities, and outdoor learning opportunities,” said Board Vice President Nick Melvoin. “This is an important step in ensuring that we not only invest in reducing the District’s carbon footprint, but also commit to growing the next generation of climate stewards to care for our planet.”

“I’m proud to support today’s resolution to integrate the teaching of climate change in our District to reflect the urgency of this global issue,” said Board Member Tanya Ortiz Franklin. “This resolution will prepare our scholars PK-12 to be the environmental justice leaders that sustain our planet for generations to come. It is crucial that all students

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have access to high-quality climate literacy instruction and outdoor education and that all schools in LA Unified have Climate Champions.”

“Learning about climate change means learning about our economy, government and communities,” said Student Board Member Parish Kanuga. “This will prompt students to be civically engaged in defining their futures and that of their environment.”

“The Climate Curricula Committee enthusiastically praises the Los Angeles Unified Board of Education for passing the Climate Literacy Resolution,” said Lucy Garcia, Chairperson of the Climate Curriculum Committee said. “The resolution is the result of important leadership and cooperation, especially as it comes during yet another challenging school year. The times we face are so full of danger. But there are still many hopeful possibilities. Students are relieved when education addresses their real fears by giving them the skills they need to safely prosper in the future. With this resolution, teachers will be supported as they begin to teach about the climate crises and climate justice in ways that are true to their disciplines. Students will see parents and others stepping up for climate solutions, and they will learn responsibility by seeing us all in action.”

“I believe that students should learn about climate change because our planet is being harmed,” said 2nd grader Anya. “Our world is getting hotter. You are never too young to know how climate change is affecting us.”

“The science is clear,” said Ella, a high school student. “There's no time to just wait for the issue to work itself out. The only way to truly reach the next generation of young, deserving global citizens is to immerse them in the issue completely.” Ella continued that she wants all students to be empowered “by establishing a curriculum that motivates, encourages, and informs students in all areas of the climate discussion.”

“Heat waves, droughts, terrible air quality, wildfires, more pandemics -- I have anxiety about climate change,” said 5th grader Ari. “This is our new world. What are we going to do about it?” Ari knows that teaching about climate change is the answer. “The more people learn, the more people will do something,” he added.

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