

RESOLUTION No. 5272

Resolution to Develop an Implementation Plan for Climate Literacy

RECITALS

- A. On the April 19, 2016, several community members, including representatives from 350PDX, presented to the Board of Education's Teaching and Learning Committee a resolution that provided, in part, below:

At a time when the science of global warming has prompted governments around the world to begin redefining our economies and to call for an end to the fossil fuel era, it is time for school districts to redefine what it means to educate students for a future of certain climate change. Climate literacy is essential for the success of Portland Public Schools students, both as members of their communities and citizens of the world.

Climate change is already having an enormous negative impact on nature and people around the world—which will only become worse—including present and future Portland Public Schools students.

There is overwhelming consensus in the scientific community that the climate crisis is created by human beings releasing greenhouse gases by mining and burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas); through deforestation; and with environmentally damaging agricultural practices.

It is essential that in their classes and other school activities students probe the causes and consequences of the climate crisis—as well as possible solutions—in developmentally appropriate ways, and, from pre-K through 12th grade, become “climate literate”...

All Portland Public Schools students should develop confidence and passion when it comes to making a positive difference in society, and come to see themselves as activists and leaders for social and environmental justice—especially through seeing the diversity of people around the world who are fighting the root causes of climate change; and it is vital that students reflect on local impacts of the climate crisis, and recognize how their own communities and lives are implicated...

Portland Public Schools does not currently have a strategy for helping district educators to develop or to implement curriculum on the climate crisis...

Portland Public Schools' oft-stated commitment to equity requires us to investigate the unequal effects of climate change and to consistently apply an equity lens as we shape our response to this crisis...

In implementing its commitment to prepare students for college and careers, Portland Public Schools recognizes that as our society moves rapidly and definitively away from fossil fuels, we will need to prepare our students for robust job opportunities in green technologies, construction, and restoration efforts...

- B. As part of the resolution presented at the April 19, 2016 Board of Education's Teaching and Learning Committee, there was a request for the following:

Portland Public Schools [commit] itself to providing teachers, administrators, and other school personnel with professional development, curricular materials, and outdoor and field studies that explore the breadth of causes and consequences of the climate crisis as well as potential solutions that address the root causes of the crisis; and do so in ways that are participatory, imaginative, and respectful of students' and teachers' creativity and eagerness to be part of addressing global problems, and that build a sense of personal efficacy and empowerment...

Portland Public Schools [commit] itself to drawing on local resources to build climate justice curriculum—especially inviting the participation of people from “frontline” communities, which have been the first and hardest hit by climate change—and people who are here, in part, as climate refugees...

Portland Public Schools [recognize] that our schools must play a leadership role in modeling for students climate- and environmentally friendly practices when it comes to building design, energy use (including the use of solar panels), land use, waste disposal, and composting and recycling...

PPS curriculum will make students aware of training opportunities and living-wage jobs in the just transition away from fossil fuels—e.g., retrofitting old buildings to make them more energy efficient, the installation of solar panels, and more sustainable agricultural practices...

On a regular basis Portland Public Schools will sponsor activities that bring together teachers, students, and members of the community who are working for a future free of fossil fuels and for just solutions to the climate crisis, to share knowledge, resources, curriculum, and opportunities for students to become active in responding positively to the climate crisis, including learning job skills that will be needed in the transition away from fossil fuels; and ...that in developing a climate action plan for the school district, planners be mindful of proceeding in a way that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of our student population; and that Portland Public Schools will support each school as it endeavors to effect this policy in response to the climate crisis...

- C. At their April 19, 2016 meeting, the Teaching and Learning Committee voted 3-0 to support the concept of the development and implementation plan for integrating climate change curriculum into instruction.

RESOLUTION

1. The Board of Education would like to thank the organizations and community partners that endorsed the resolution that was presented to the Teaching and Learning Committee, and for their activism on climate literacy.
2. Guided by the above recitals, the Board of Education directs the Superintendent in collaboration with PPS students, teachers, and community members to develop an implementation plan so that there is curriculum and educational opportunities that address climate change and climate justice in all Portland Public Schools.
3. The implementation plan should include a review of current textbooks for accuracy around the severity of the climate crisis and the impact of human activities. PPS will abandon the use of any adopted text material that is found to express doubt about the severity of the climate crisis or its root in human activities.