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**SB-720 Environmental education: environmental principles and concepts.** (2017-2018)

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**Senate Bill No. 720**

**CHAPTER 374**

An act to add Section 51227.3 to the Education Code, and to amend Section 71301 of the Public Resources Code, relating to environmental education.

[ Approved by Governor September 13, 2018. Filed with Secretary of State September 13, 2018. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SB 720, Allen. Environmental education: environmental principles and concepts.

(1) Existing law establishes a system of public elementary and secondary education in this state. Under this system, local educational agencies throughout the state provide instruction to pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive.

This bill would express the findings and declarations of the Legislature that the state's environmental principles and concepts have been approved by specified authorities and have been embedded in specified curriculum frameworks adopted by the State Board of Education. The bill would also express the intent of the Legislature that the Superintendent of Public Instruction use the resources at his or her disposal to provide leadership to further specified goals of environmental literacy.

(2) Existing law establishes courses of study for pupils in grades 1 to 6, inclusive, and also establishes courses of study for pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive.

This bill would express the encouragement of the Legislature for the governing boards of school districts to take specified actions with regard to promoting instruction in environmental literacy for pupils with respect to the respective courses of study for grades 1 to 6, inclusive, and for grades 7 to 12, inclusive.

(3) Existing law requires the Office of Education and the Environment in the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, in cooperation with the State Department of Education and the State Board of Education, to develop and implement a unified education strategy on the environment for elementary and secondary schools in the state and, in cooperation with specified state entities, to develop educational principles for the environment for elementary and secondary school pupils. Existing law provides that the principles may be updated every 4 years beginning July 1, 2008. Existing law requires the State Department of Education and the State Board of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, to develop and implement to the extent feasible, a teacher training and implementation plan, to guide the implementation of the unified education strategy, as specified.

This bill would instead require these state entities to develop environmental principles and concepts for elementary and secondary school pupils. The bill would instead provide that the environmental principles and concepts may be updated every 4 years beginning July 1, 2008, by the office, in cooperation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the Natural Resources Agency, pursuant to a specified process.

The bill would also add concepts relating to climate change and make technical and conforming changes to these environmental principles and concepts.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

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## THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

### **SECTION 1.** (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) Pursuant to Chapter 665 of the Statutes of 2003 and Chapter 581 of the Statutes of 2005, California has created a set of environmental principles and concepts that have been approved by the Secretary for Environmental Protection and the California Integrated Waste Management Board (now called the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle)) in consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education (state board) and adopted in 2004 by the state board.

(2) These environmental principles and concepts have been embedded in the curriculum frameworks adopted by the state board both for science and for history-social science, as well as the publishers' criteria for both subjects. Further, the state board's guidelines require that the environmental principles and concepts be embedded in the development of the 2018 Health Education Framework.

(3) These environmental principles and concepts have served as the basis for a state board-approved model curriculum that has been widely in use in schools across California.

(4) The environmental principles and concepts identified pursuant to paragraph (1) are, therefore, fundamental to the definition of environmental literacy in California and should be deemed to be the official environmental principles and concepts for public education in California and may only be updated or amended as set forth in Section 71301 of the Public Resources Code.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the Superintendent of Public Instruction use the resources at his or her disposal to provide leadership to further the goals of environmental literacy that include, but are not necessarily limited to, all of the following activities:

(1) Assist in providing professional development to educators in environmental literacy, in the integration of environmental literacy with other state-adopted standards and curriculum frameworks, and in the development and implementation of curriculum and learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom that promote environmental literacy.

(2) Assist in building and supporting partnerships, and regional and statewide networks of public and private agencies and organizations, including, but not limited to, the California Regional Environmental Education Community, county offices of education, school districts, and private partners, such as not-for-profit organizations, and community-based education providers that support the advancement of environmental literacy in California.

(3) Ensure that environmental literacy curriculum and learning experiences are made available on an equitable basis to all pupils and that the environmental literacy curriculum and learning experiences reflect the linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of California.

(4) Encourage and support the incorporation of the environmental principles and concepts into the credential requirements for both teachers and school administrators.

(5) Encourage the continuation of the incorporation of the environmental principles and concepts, where appropriate, in the development of statewide assessments of cognitive and noncognitive pupil achievement established by the state board.

(6) Assist in the incorporation of environmental principles and concepts into curriculum and instruction for career and technical education.

(7) Engage with other executive branch agencies and departments, including, but not necessarily limited to, CalRecycle's Office of Education and the Environment, for the purpose of obtaining technical assistance, as needed, and to ensure that the activities set forth in this section are based on the most current scientific and technical knowledge.

### **SEC. 2.** (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) Environmental literacy is an important element of the Next Generation Science Standards adopted by the State Board of Education (state board) as well as K–12 instruction that integrates California's adopted environmental principles and concepts, within both the science and the history-social science curriculum frameworks adopted by the state board.

(2) A Blueprint for Environmental Literacy produced by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, through an Environmental Literacy Task Force in 2015, set forth the critical guiding principles of: (A) ensuring equity and access, (B) building sustainable

and scalable delivery systems, (C) cultivating collaboration among stakeholders, (D) ensuring commitment to quality programs, (E) addressing cultural relevance, and (F) providing a variety of learning experiences necessary to achieve environmental literacy. The Blueprint for Environmental Literacy also identified an array of strategies to achieve California's environmental literacy goals.

(3) Environmental literacy constitutes an important curriculum content area, and also provides problem solving skills and hands-on, real-world learning experiences that have been demonstrated through educational research to enhance pupils' achievement across many subject areas, promoting understanding and engagement in learning.

(4) Developing an environmentally literate population will enhance our ability to develop and implement solutions to our environmental literacy and environmental justice challenges, and will provide a critical foundation of skills and knowledge to help pupils compete in a growing job market where science, mathematics, engineering, technology, and language arts proficiency are highly sought after.

(5) California has a rich array of scientists, community-based organizations, and informal education providers whose deep expertise in science, history-social science, public health, social and environmental justice, and other environmental content should be harnessed to support expanded environmental literacy instruction in our public schools.

(6) There are wide disparities across the state in access to environment-based learning experiences.

(b) The Legislature, therefore, encourages the governing boards of school districts to do all of the following with respect to the course of study in grades 1 to 6, inclusive:

(1) Embed environmental literacy in local control and accountability plans, including, but not necessarily limited to, embedding environmental literacy elements in local priorities and goals adopted pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 52060 of, or subdivision (h) of Section 52066 of, the Education Code.

(2) Provide professional development for educators in environmental literacy, in the integration of environmental principles and concepts and other environmental content with state-adopted standards and curriculum frameworks, and in the development and implementation of curriculum and activities inside and outside of the classroom that promote environmental literacy.

(3) Build partnerships with other local educational agencies and with community-based organizations, informal education providers with expertise in science, history-social science, public health, social and environmental justice, and other environmental content providers in all aspects of environmental literacy programs.

(4) Ensure that environmental literacy curriculum and learning experiences are made available on an equitable basis to all pupils and that the environmental literacy curriculum and learning experiences reflect the linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of California.

**SEC. 3.** (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) Environmental literacy is an important element of the Next Generation Science Standards adopted by the State Board of Education (state board) as well as K–12 instruction that integrates California's adopted environmental principles and concepts, within both the science and the history-social science curriculum frameworks adopted by the state board.

(2) A Blueprint for Environmental Literacy produced by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, through an Environmental Literacy Task Force in 2015, set forth the critical guiding principles of: (A) ensuring equity and access, (B) building sustainable and scalable delivery systems, (C) cultivating collaboration among stakeholders, (D) ensuring commitment to quality programs, (E) addressing cultural relevance, and (F) providing a variety of learning experiences necessary to achieve environmental literacy. The Blueprint for Environmental Literacy also identified an array of strategies to achieve California's environmental literacy goals.

(3) Environmental literacy constitutes an important curriculum content area, and also provides problem solving skills and hands-on, real-world learning experiences that have been demonstrated through educational research to enhance pupils' achievement across many subject areas, promoting understanding and engagement in learning.

(4) Developing an environmentally literate population will enhance our ability to develop and implement solutions to our environmental literacy and environmental justice challenges, and will provide a critical foundation of skills and knowledge to help pupils compete in a growing job market where science, mathematics, engineering, technology, and language arts proficiency are highly sought after.

(5) California has a rich array of scientists, community-based organizations, and informal education providers whose deep expertise in science, history-social science, public health, social and environmental justice, and other environmental content should be harnessed to support expanded environmental literacy instruction in our public schools.

(6) There are wide disparities across the state in access to environment-based learning experiences.

(b) The Legislature, therefore, encourages the governing boards of school districts to do all of the following with respect to the course of study in grades 7 to 12, inclusive:

(1) Embed environmental literacy in local control and accountability plans, including, but not necessarily limited to, embedding environmental literacy elements in local priorities and goals adopted pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 52060 of, or subdivision (h) of Section 52066 of, the Education Code.

(2) Provide professional development for educators in environmental literacy, in the integration of environmental principles and concepts and other environmental content with state-adopted standards and curriculum frameworks, and in the development and implementation of curriculum and activities inside and outside of the classroom that promote environmental literacy, and in linking environmental literacy content and principles to career pathways and to career technical education curriculum and activities.

(3) Build partnerships with other local educational agencies and with community-based organizations, informal education providers with expertise in science, history-social science, public health, social and environmental justice, and other environmental content providers in all aspects of environmental literacy programs.

(4) Ensure that environmental literacy curriculum and learning experiences are made available on an equitable basis to all pupils and that the environmental literacy curriculum and learning experiences reflect the linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of California.

**SEC. 4.** Section 51227.3 is added to the Education Code, to read:

**51227.3.** (a) The Instructional Quality Commission shall ensure that the environmental principles and concepts developed pursuant to Section 71301 of the Public Resources Code are integrated into the content standards and curriculum frameworks in the subjects of English language arts, science, history-social science, health, and, to the extent practicable, mathematics whenever those standards and frameworks are revised.

(b) The environmental principles and concepts shall be incorporated, as the state board determines to be appropriate, in the criteria developed for textbook adoption required pursuant to Section 60200 or 60400.

**SEC. 5.** Section 71301 of the Public Resources Code is amended to read:

**71301.** (a) As part of the unified education strategy specified in subdivision (c) of Section 71300, the office, in cooperation with the Secretary for Environmental Protection, the Natural Resources Agency, the State Department of Education, and the State Board of Education, shall develop environmental principles and concepts for elementary and secondary school pupils.

(b) (1) The environmental principles and concepts may be updated every four years beginning July 1, 2008, by the office, in cooperation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the Natural Resources Agency, pursuant to the process set forth in paragraphs (2) and (3).

(2) When updating or amending the environmental principles and concepts, the office shall ensure that the environmental principles and concepts are based on current scientific and technical knowledge, and shall solicit and coordinate input from the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and other executive branch agencies and departments, nongovernmental science and education consultants and organizations with the relevant scientific and technical knowledge, and currently employed, credentialed, public school classroom teachers with experience in education related to the environment. A majority of the individuals consulted to review proposed updates or amendments to the environmental principles and concepts shall be credentialed, current public school elementary or secondary classroom teachers with experience in education related to the environment.

(3) When updating the environmental principles and concepts, the office shall hold a minimum of two public meetings in order for the public to provide input on the modifications. The public meetings required by this subdivision shall be held pursuant to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code).

(c) The environmental principles and concepts shall be aligned to the academic content standards adopted by the State Board of Education in the subjects of English language arts, science, history-social science, health, and, to the extent practicable, mathematics, and shall not conflict with any academic content standards. The environmental principles and concepts shall be used to do all of the following:

(1) To direct state agencies that include environmental education components for elementary and secondary education in regulatory decisions or enforcement actions.

(2) To align state agency environmental education programs and materials that are developed for elementary and secondary education.

(3) For provision, by the office, of technical assistance to state agencies involved in the integration of the environmental principles and concepts in programs they operate, and in the integration of the environmental principles and concepts into state curriculum standards, frameworks, and instructional materials pursuant to Section 51227.3 of the Education Code.

(d) The environmental principles and concepts shall include, but not be limited to, concepts relating to the following topics:

(1) Air.

(2) Climate change.

(3) Energy.

(4) Environmental justice.

(5) Environmental sustainability.

(6) Fish and wildlife resources.

(7) Forestry.

(8) Integrated pest management.

(9) Oceans.

(10) Pollution prevention.

(11) Public health and the environment.

(12) Resource conservation, waste reduction, and recycling.

(13) Toxics and hazardous waste.

(14) Water.