

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND LITERACY

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTION No. 2460-1**

WHEREAS, environmental education offers countless opportunities to improve lives, protect the environment, and prepare all residents to address critical environmental challenges ahead; and

WHEREAS, environmental education is a chance for students to advocate, learn, and grow while experiencing the world around them. This type of education teaches youth that their actions contribute to a meaningful impact on the earth; and

WHEREAS, damage to the environment is evident as the global annual temperature continued to increase in 2024 and was the warmest year since global records began in 1850. The ten warmest years were all within the last decade, 2015-2024, according to the [National Centers for Environmental Information's 2024 Global Climate report](#); and

WHEREAS, as the temperature increases, so do the consequences for society. The climate crisis is one of our greatest public health crises according to more than 230 medical journals, as reported in research from the [National Library of Medicine](#); and

WHEREAS, recognizing education has a role in reducing the effects of climate change on young people, local educational agencies (LEAs) create, support, and engage in climate observances, initiatives, and programs for students. Such observances include Environmental Educational Week in March, Earth Day in April, World Environment Day in June, and Climate Action Week in September; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, California has signed into law [Assembly Bill 285](#), which requires that all K-12 students receive climate change education with an emphasis on the causes of climate change, adaptation to climate change and mitigation; and

WHEREAS, California has implemented the Next Generation Science Standards which allows students to demonstrate an understanding of science skills, engage in real-world inquiry, and address climate change; and

WHEREAS, the environmental principles and concepts in California's curriculum frameworks highlight the complex relationship between humans and the Earth and are the foundation of the environmental content taught in the model curriculum. The five principles include 1) People Depend on Natural Systems, 2) People Influence Natural Systems, 3) Natural Systems Change in Ways that People Benefit From and Can Influence, 4) There are no Permanent or Impermeable Boundaries that Prevent Matter from Flowing Between Systems, and 5) Decisions Affecting Resources and Natural Systems are Complex and Involve Many Factors; and

WHEREAS, the previously mentioned observances that highlight environmental education and literacy throughout the year provide several opportunities for students to advocate for their right to easily accessible and clean green spaces that will be preserved for future generations, as outlined in the [Bill of Rights for Children and Young Adults for Santa Clara County](#); and

WHEREAS, youth-focused organizations such as Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action (SVYCA), a youth-led non-profit that empowers teens and young adults are taking steps to combat climate change and partner to create impactful education and policy initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) is committed to promoting sustainability, enhancing environmental literacy, and encouraging students to be environmentally conscious citizens in their local communities and beyond; and

WHEREAS, in support of environmental education, the SCCOE offers both Walden West Environmental Education which provides science camps, summer programs, and school programs, and iSTEAM (Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) which provides high-quality professional learning opportunities and instructional supports to improve teaching and learning in arts, career and technical education (CTE), computer science, environmental literacy, mathematics, and science; and

WHEREAS, the SCCOE's environmental literacy [website](#) provides resources for community members to learn about climate action, assist school districts with curriculum, and inform educators about community events related to environmental literacy and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, to support individual campuses in their pursuit of becoming more sustainable, the SCCOE supports schools in creating a Climate Action Plan. A Climate Action Plan is a strategic framework that is detailed and aims to track and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to Global Warming; and

WHEREAS, the SCCOE supports the development of school gardens and school garden curriculum across Santa Clara County through the [Growing Gardens Project](#); and

WHEREAS, the SCCOE is working in partnership with California Volunteers, Office of the Governor in sponsoring [California Climate Action Corps Fellows](#) to support our school gardens and sustainability work; and

WHEREAS, the SCCOE has partnered with the County of Santa Clara's Office of Sustainability to support the Youth Climate Initiative and the two youth Sustainability Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the SCCOE will host the third annual Environmental Literacy Summit on April 5, 2025, to create a space for youth and educators to learn about green career pathways, school gardens for health and education, how to advocate in the community, and more; and

WHEREAS, the SCCOE is dedicated to creating equitable resources for youth, school communities, and educators in the field of environmental education; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Santa Clara County Board of Education and County Interim Superintendent of Schools do hereby adopt this resolution recognizing the benefits of environmental education and literacy while affirming a shared commitment to inspire and promote environmental education and advocacy of this Earth.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the County Board of Education at a meeting held on March 19, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES: Jessica Speiser, Don Rocha, Maimona Afzal Berta, Victoria Chon, Tara Sreekrishnan

NOES: none

ABSTAIN: none

ABSENT: Raeena Lari, Jorge Pacheco

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Maimona Afzal Berta". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Maimona Afzal Berta, President
Santa Clara County Board of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Charles Hinman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Charles Hinman, Ed.D.
Interim County Superintendent of Schools