

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY and SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION AND CLIMATE ACTION**

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
RESOLUTION No. 2291-4**

**WHEREAS**, schools in California and nationwide have the potential to effect positive, tangible environmental change while preparing students — in their careers and civic life — to be stewards of their communities, the earth and its resources; and

**WHEREAS**, “It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred;”<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, damage to the environment is evident at the current 1°C (1.8°F) worldwide average increase above pre-industrial levels, portending much worse effects as temperatures rise further, including cascading changes if tipping points are breached; and

**WHEREAS**, CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) remain in the atmosphere for decades and centuries, thus committing humankind to future warming from prior emissions and adverse economic and societal impacts which today’s children as adults will have to address; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 230 Medical Journals warn that our climate crisis is our greatest public health crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, GHG emissions, including particulates, exacerbate existing inequities, especially for those Californians living near port and warehousing sites, transportation corridors, fossil fuel extraction and refining facilities, industrial sites, and agriculturally intensive regions; and

**WHEREAS**, there is broad consensus within the scientific community that human activities contribute to increases in greenhouse gas emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change is a non-partisan issue and local, state and national policies are best guided by the available science; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change presents a series of governance-related challenges for public agencies, including school districts and county offices of education; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change is a global issue that requires local, state, national and international extension; and

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report, (2021), <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

**WHEREAS**, climate change and extreme climate-related events such as wildfires, floods, extreme heat and public safety power shut offs — directly impact the physical and economic health of communities in which our students and their families live, while also causing lost learning days; and

**WHEREAS**, California's Fourth Climate Assessment estimates that if greenhouse gas emissions are not reduced, the average water supply from California's snowpack is projected to decline to 2/3 of historical levels by 2050 and total sea level rise by 2100 is expected to be 54 inches; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fourth Climate Assessment also finds that action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which also release criteria air pollutants, including particulate matter, nitrous oxides and volatile organic compounds — will indirectly improve California's air quality; and

**WHEREAS**, the negative impacts of climate change, including public health and economic consequences, have a disproportionate impact on chronically underserved communities; and

**WHEREAS**, environmental education has long been encouraged in California schools and under state law enacted in 2018 includes the topics of climate change and environmental justice;<sup>2</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards in California classrooms provides an opportunity for students to engage in real-world inquiry and application of science skills in understanding and addressing climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, the clean energy sector presents economic opportunity for students and the local economy; and

**WHEREAS**, implementation of sustainable practices on school campuses, capital investments to improve energy efficiency, and other environmentally mindful purchasing decisions can yield cost savings for schools; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change adaptations of school infrastructure and practices can mitigate the risk and impact of increased natural disasters; and

**WHEREAS**, environmental initiatives can yield benefits for communities such as safe and healthy transportation to and from school, improved air and water quality, workforce development; and

**WHEREAS**, California's children and youth have demonstrated leadership and desire that their representatives advocate for their communities' well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, California students across many grade levels — including those in their early elementary years and all the way up through high school — strive to be environmentally conscious in their daily lives and to

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<sup>2</sup> Public Resources Code, Section 71301,  
[http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PRC&sectionNum=71301.&highlight=true&keyword=environmental%20principles%20and%20concepts](http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PRC&sectionNum=71301.&highlight=true&keyword=environmental%20principles%20and%20concepts)  
[California Climate Change Assessment](#)

Other resources (Not directly referenced)

[Homepage - K12 Climate Action](#)

[A Blueprint for Environmental Literacy - Science \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)

[School Boards \(weebly.com\)](#)

County of Santa Clara Office of Sustainability: [Home](#) | [SCC Sustainability Plan](#) and Climate Roadmap 2030: [Climate Roadmap 2030 - Office of Sustainability - County of Santa Clara \(sccgov.org\)](#)

be active and engaged leaders on combating global climate change in their community, both now and in the future; and

**WHEREAS**, the County Superintendent of Schools recognizes the importance of engaging student voices as the younger generation bears the greatest potential burdens from climate change and deserve meaningful pathways and opportunities to mitigate this threat; and

**WHEREAS**, the County Superintendent of Schools is committed to identifying opportunities within the curriculum, and providing additional learning and leadership opportunities where possible, that reflect students' environmental goals for their civic lives and their academic and professional careers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) provides professional development that supports the implementation of curriculum that integrates the subject content areas (science, math, history, arts, etc.) with the Environmental Principles and Concepts (EP&C); and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Clara County Office of Education provides high-quality, embedded, and ongoing professional development to educators on environmental literacy, climate change, climate solutions, climate justice and sustainability; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Clara County Office of Education partners with local Indigenous communities, Tribal organizations, and Indian centers to integrate Indigenous knowledge into teaching and learning about environmental literacy, climate change, climate solutions, and sustainability; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Clara County Office of Education provides environmental education and sustainability education through Walden West Outdoor Science School and has done so for over 70 years; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Clara County Office of Education provides support for educators and community based partners through the Environmental Literacy Leadership Collaborative; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Clara County Office of Education leverages its partnerships established with Environmental Literacy Community Based Partners who have been working with SCCOE and school districts on environmental literacy, sustainability and gardening professional learning and projects; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Clara County Office of Education is expanding its support and technical assistance for sustainability, school gardens, and school garden curriculum in schools across Santa Clara County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Clara County Office of Education will support interested school districts with the development of and implementation of sustainability and climate action plans in alignment with the County of Santa Clara's Sustainability Master Plan and Climate Roadmap 2030; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Clara County Office of Education will be a partner with the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and Santa Clara County Office of Sustainability to support comprehensive environmental literacy and education and participate on the Sustainability Commission when it is formalized; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools in collaboration with the County of Santa Clara endeavors to connect with key stakeholders within the community — including student and youth groups — on the importance of local climate action to gather input and identify additional opportunities for student learning and activism; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools and the Santa Clara County Board of Education recognize that there is increasing demand for a skilled workforce in the clean energy and sustainability sectors, and that schools can help meet this demand by providing enriched learning opportunities for students to prepare for careers in these emerging and important fields; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools and Santa Clara County Board of Education call on the California Department of Education, the California State Board of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to provide increased opportunities for local educational agencies to promote student learning on the effects of global climate change and identifying solutions; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools and Santa Clara County Board of Education calls on federal entities, such as the U.S. Departments of Education and Energy, to support the efforts of state and local educational agencies to expand their curriculum and opportunities for student learning on climate and environmental literacy; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools and the Santa Clara County Board of Education support the exploration, development, and continuation of initiatives to address environmental challenges and create a healthier, more sustainable environment for Santa Clara County Students, families and communities and pursuing funding in support thereof; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the County Superintendent of Schools and Santa Clara County Board of Education do hereby acknowledge that a climate emergency threatens our county, state, nation, and world, and thus should be an important consideration in formulating policies.

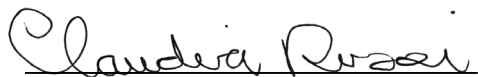
**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Santa Clara County Board of Education at a meeting held on December 15, 2021, by the following vote:

AYES: President Rossi, Vice President Ortiz and Trustees Chon, Di Salvo, Kamei, Sreekrishnan and Mah

NOES: none

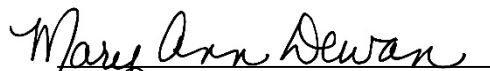
ABSTAIN: none

ABSENT: none



Claudia Rossi, President

Santa Clara County Board of Education



Mary Ann Dewan, Ph.D.

County Superintendent of Schools