

SENATE No. 311

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Julian Cyr

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act implementing an elementary and secondary interdisciplinary climate education curriculum in the Commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Julian Cyr</i>	<i>Cape and Islands</i>	
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>6/25/2021</i>
<i>John J. Cronin</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>7/8/2021</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/8/2022</i>

SENATE No. 311

By Mr. Cyr, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 311) of Julian Cyr for legislation to implement an elementary and secondary interdisciplinary climate education curriculum in the Commonwealth. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act implementing an elementary and secondary interdisciplinary climate education curriculum in the Commonwealth.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby further amended by inserting after section 1Q
2 the following new section:-

3 Section 1R.

4 (a) The board shall direct the commissioner to institute a process for setting curriculum
5 standards for the subjects of history and social sciences to include relevant and interdisciplinary
6 climate change standards that will provide students with a deeper understanding of climate
7 policy, climate justice, and climate activism.

8 In forming a curriculum the commissioner may reference relevant elementary and
9 secondary education history and social sciences standards for climate change in other states and
10 from relevant reputable entities.

11 The commissioner shall ensure that issues involving those disproportionately affected by
12 climate change are addressed in the curriculum, including but not limited to:

13 (1) How conditions and effects in the Northern Hemisphere differ from the conditions
14 and effects in the Southern Hemisphere.

15 (2) Environmental justice communities in the Commonwealth, defined as “regions that
16 have the most significant exposure to air pollutants, including, but not limited to, communities
17 with minority populations, communities with low-income populations, or both”.

18 (3) How historical movement building connects with current and local movements, and
19 how both strived to create social change.

20 (4) How environmental issues, including climate change, cause severe health issues:
21 asthma, cancer, lead poisoning, inaccessibility of housing, food and water.

22 (5) How to engage your community, civic leaders, and government officials in
23 confronting climate change.

24 (b) The board shall direct the commissioner to institute a process for setting curriculum
25 standards for the subjects of science and technology to include relevant and interdisciplinary
26 climate change standards that will provide students with a deeper understanding of
27 anthropogenic climate change, equitable climate solutions, climate policy and climate activism.

28 In forming a curriculum the commissioner may reference relevant elementary and
29 secondary education science and technology standards for climate change in other states and
30 from relevant reputable entities.

31 The commissioner shall ensure that issues involving those disproportionately affected by
32 climate change are addressed in the curriculum, including but not limited to:

33 (1) The human impact on the carbon cycle, emphasizing long residence time of carbon
34 dioxide in atmosphere and ocean surface waters.

35 (2) Global warming's impact on the water cycle, including the loss of both sea and land
36 based ice, specifically in regard to the Arctic region, Greenland, and Antarctica, increase in
37 evaporation due to higher temperatures in lower latitudes, higher likelihood of severe
38 storms/torrential rain and the release of greenhouse gasses from melting permafrost, lower
39 albedo relating to less ice/snow coverage, increased water vapor in atmosphere with higher
40 temperatures, and the release of carbon dioxide from soils and plant biomass from large scale
41 fires.

42 (3) Loss of forests on global scale from fire and land alteration for agriculture, further
43 limiting uptake and storage in soils and plant biomass.

44 (4) How environmental problems including, climate change, natural disasters, energy
45 facilities and pollutants impact human health, economics, and agricultural systems.

46 (c). The commissioner shall:

47 (1) Ensure that bilingual and english as a second language students are given the same
48 curricula and learning opportunities by providing them with multilingual resources regarding
49 environmental activism, climate policy and climate justice in the formation of this curriculum.

50 (2) Consult environmental and climate justice organizations and professionals throughout
51 the commonwealth while creating these standards. These organizations must include, but are not
52 limited to: youth-led advocacy organizations and conservation focused non-profit organizations.

53 (3) Engage a diverse council of youth leaders between the ages of 14 to 18, 18 to 22, and
54 22 to 25 who reside within the commonwealth from a range of geographic areas, including
55 environmental justice communities from the commonwealth, to provide feedback on draft
56 standards and supplements for the different subjects before the board may vote to approve them.
57 These students will work in conjunction with a variety of professionals in the climate education
58 field. This council, both student and professional, will remain standing, with membership
59 reevaluated every year, to continue to assess the application of these standards and supplements.

60 (4) Provide professional development opportunities for educators on the history and
61 social science and science and technology frameworks and work to create tools aligned with the
62 framework to support districts in the implementation process. Additional support and outreach
63 from the department may include statewide and regional trainings, meetings or conferences,
64 including opportunities for districts and stakeholders to assess and share evidence-based best
65 practices in support of climate change education and provide feedback and recommendations to
66 the department.

67 (5) Make recommendations on the appropriate grade levels for the interdisciplinary
68 climate standards to be offered in, subject to approval by the board. The commissioner shall
69 make every effort to solicit feedback from superintendents, teachers and students in the
70 formation of these recommendations.

71 (6) A final curriculum approved by the board must include provisions to create
72 assignments for students to directly contact their elected officials in support of an issue, such as
73 environmental justice.

74 (d). This legislation shall take effect on January 1, 2022. All requirements within the
75 legislation shall be satisfied and implemented by school districts under the department's purview
76 on or before August 1, 2024.