SENATE DOCKET, NO. 896 FILED ON: 1/15/2025

SENATE . . . . . No. 391

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jason M. Lewis

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 elementary and secondary interdisciplinary climate literacy education.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
Jason M. Lewis	*Fifth Middlesex*	
James B. Eldridge	*Middlesex and Worcester*	*1/28/2025*
Rebecca L. Rausch	*Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex*	*1/29/2025*
Joanne M. Comerford	*Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester*	*1/29/2025*
Sal N. DiDomenico	*Middlesex and Suffolk*	*2/3/2025*
Jacob R. Oliveira	*Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester*	*2/7/2025*
James K. Hawkins	*2nd Bristol*	*2/12/2025*
Vanna Howard	*17th Middlesex*	*2/18/2025*
Manny Cruz	*7th Essex*	*2/26/2025*
Brendan P. Crighton	*Third Essex*	*3/4/2025*
Joan B. Lovely	*Second Essex*	*3/31/2025*
Lydia Edwards	*Third Suffolk*	*4/1/2025*
John J. Cronin	*Worcester and Middlesex*	*4/29/2025*
Pavel M. Payano	*First Essex*	*7/7/2025*

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SENATE . . . . . No. 391

By Mr. Lewis, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 391) of Jason M. Lewis, James B. Eldridge, Rebecca L. Rausch, Joanne M. Comerford and other members of the General Court for legislation to implement elementary and secondary interdisciplinary climate literacy education in public schools. Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. *2668* OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act implementing elementary and secondary interdisciplinary climate literacy education.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 29 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following section.

Section 2BBBBBB

(a) To achieve, promote and support the instruction of interdisciplinary climate literacy education for K-12 public school students in districts across the commonwealth, there shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Interdisciplinary Climate Literacy Trust Fund. There shall be credited to the fund: (1) revenue from appropriations and other money authorized by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (2) funds from public and private sources such as gifts, grants, and

donations to further interdisciplinary climate literacy education; and (3) interest earned on money in the fund. Amounts credited to the fund shall not be subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund.

(b)(1) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education, in consultation with the Interdisciplinary Climate Literacy Council established in section 1U(b) of chapter 69 of the General Laws, shall make expenditures from the fund, without further appropriation, to support the development and implementation of Elementary and Secondary Interdisciplinary Climate Literacy Plans, including, but not limited to:

(i) development, purchase, distribution and implementation of curricular materials for interdisciplinary climate literacy;

(ii) professional development training, including the provision of trainings, seminars, conferences and materials, for educators to use in the teaching of interdisciplinary climate literacy in K-12 grades;

(iii) opportunities for districts and stakeholders to assess and share evidence-based best practices in support of climate change education and student skill development, and to provide feedback and recommendations to the department.; and

(iv) provide technical support to districts for their elementary and secondary interdisciplinary climate literacy plans.

(2) In making such expenditures, the commissioner shall prioritize underserved communities across the commonwealth including those public schools or school districts with high concentrations of economically-disadvantaged students; those public schools or school

districts which serve high proportion of students from environmental justice populations, as defined in section 62 of chapter 30 of the General Laws; or which are located in environmental justice communities or communities that have or will in the future experience disproportionate effects of the change in climate.

(3) In making such expenditures, the commissioner may also prioritize schools implementing an interdisciplinary climate literacy program for the first time consistent with the standards set by the department of elementary and secondary education.

SECTION 2. Section 1D of chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “skills”, in line 38, the following words:-

, interdisciplinary climate literacy

SECTION 3. Chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 1T the following new section:-

Section 1U. Elementary and Secondary Interdisciplinary Climate Literacy Plans

(a) as used in this section the following word shall, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meaning:-

“Interdisciplinary climate literacy”, An understanding of how human actions influence the climate, and how the climate influences people and other parts of the Earth system through the curricula of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, arts, history, social sciences, civics, and government.

(b) The commissioner shall create an Interdisciplinary Climate Literacy Advisory Council. The commissioner, in consultation with the Council, shall promulgate guidelines on the development and implementation of district-level Interdisciplinary Climate Literacy Plans.

(c) The council shall consist of 10 members: 2 youth leaders from a range of communities across the Commonwealth, including representatives of diverse environmental justice neighborhoods; 2 representatives of environmental justice organizations; 2 educators representing different disciplines from the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, arts, history, social sciences, civics, or government; 2 representatives of environmental education organizations, 1 educator union representative with experience and expertise in youth mentorship, and 2 experts in climate science and best practices in policy.

(d) The guidelines promulgated by the commissioner with the Council shall require district-level Interdisciplinary Climate Literacy Plans to:

(1) be developed with the involvement and input of youth from the district;

(2) be developed in consultation with environmental, environmental education, civics, and environmental justice organizations or professionals; and

(3) provide equivalent culturally competent instruction and opportunities for English language learners.

(e) Each district may implement an Interdisciplinary Climate Literacy Plan that will provide students with an understanding of the causes of, impacts from, and policy proposals addressing anthropogenic climate change. Plans shall include, but not be limited to; education on environmental justice, the underlying causes of climate change, the effects and consequences

of climate change, international reactions, history, and progression of scientific climate research and governmental and nongovernmental responses; evidence based policy solutions, the role of climate and environmental activism in policy making, the essential principles of Earth's climate system, the options to address human-caused climate change, how to recognize credible information about climate change and know where to find it; how to communicate about climate change in accurate and effective ways, and how to make informed decisions related to climate change.

(f) The department shall utilize funding from the Interdisciplinary Climate Literacy Trust Fund to support districts to develop or implement their Interdisciplinary Climate Literacy Plans.

(g) Annually, not later than October 1, the commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall report to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the joint committee on education and the house and senate committees on ways and means on the fund's activities. The report shall include, but not be limited to:

(i) the source and amount of funds received;

(ii) the expenditures made from the fund and the purposes of such expenditures, including the school districts that have received funding, indicating those that serve environmental justice populations; the purpose of the funds, and the estimated number of students, grade levels, and classes who were projected to benefit from the Fund's support; and

(iii) the report shall be publicly available on the department's website, along with the names and sources of educational materials developed or used and the partner organizations enlisted, as a result of the grant awards in order to increase access to these resources.