



103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

SB3644

Introduced 2/9/2024, by Sen. Laura Ellman

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

105 ILCS 5/27-23.17 new

Amends the Courses of Study Article of the School Code. Provides that, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, every public high school shall include instruction on climate change and the impacts and causes of climate change in grades 9 through 12 in specified courses. Provides that the State Board of Education shall convene a working group of students, educators, and experts in the area of climate change. Sets forth tasks for the working group concerning State learning standards. Provides that the State Superintendent of Education shall prepare and make available to school boards instructional materials and professional development training for educators that may be used as guidelines for development of the instruction. Effective immediately.

LRB103 38155 RJT 68288 b

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The School Code is amended by adding Sections
5 27-23.17 as follows:

6 (105 ILCS 5/27-23.17 new)

7 Sec. 27-23.17. Environmental education.

8 (a) Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, every public
9 high school shall include instruction on climate change and
10 the impacts of climate change in grades 9 through 12 in all of
11 the following courses:

12 (1) All science courses, including electives, that are
13 subject to the Illinois Science Standards or the Next
14 Generation Science Standards, including physical science,
15 life science, earth science, and engineering design.
16 Science courses under this paragraph (1) may include, but
17 are not limited to, all of the following:

18 (A) Biology.

19 (B) Geology.

20 (C) Oceanography.

21 (D) Environmental science.

22 (E) Advanced Placement Biology.

23 (F) Advanced Placement Environmental Science.

1 (G) Zoology.

2 (H) Plant science.

3 (I) Botany.

4 (2) All courses that are subject to agricultural,
5 food, and natural resources learning standards and that
6 address food, food systems, food production, and
7 sustainability. These courses may include, but are not
8 limited to, all of the following:

9 (A) Agronomy.

10 (B) Horticulture.

11 (C) Agribusiness.

12 (D) Plant science.

13 (E) Soil science.

14 (3) All courses, including electives, that are subject
15 to the Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science in
16 civics, geography, anthropology, economics, history,
17 sociology, and psychology.

18 (4) Career and technical education courses that impact
19 or are impacted by the environment or climate change,
20 including, but not limited to, all of the following:

21 (A) Engineering.

22 (B) Business.

23 (C) Law.

24 (D) Economics.

25 (E) Consumer economics.

26 (b) The State Board of Education shall convene a working

1 group of students, educators, and experts in the area of
2 climate change. The working group shall include high school
3 students and classroom teachers in science, agriculture,
4 social science, and relevant disciplines that fall under
5 career and technical education. The working group may include
6 discipline-specific experts in climate change and the impacts
7 of climate change.

8 The working group shall be charged with all of the
9 following tasks:

10 (1) Identifying, evaluating, and, if deemed necessary
11 by the working group, modifying State learning standards
12 that address or relate to climate change.

13 (2) Developing additional learning standards for
14 climate change and determining the placement of these
15 additional standards into the State learning standards for
16 science, social science, career and technical education,
17 and agriculture.

18 (3) Creating climate change learning standards for any
19 additional content areas that the State Board of Education
20 deems appropriate or necessary.

21 (4) If deemed helpful or appropriate by the working
22 group, developing supporting documents that list all
23 required climate change learning standards across all
24 subject areas and disciplines in a single document.

25 (5) Creating climate change learning standards for
26 each of the courses identified in paragraphs (1) through

1 (4) of subsection (a).

2 (c) As part of the task process under subsection (b), the
3 working group may use, without limitation, all of the
4 following issues and themes to guide the creation of new
5 learning standards and the modification of existing learning
6 standards:

7 (1) The basic foundation and definition of
8 human-caused climate change.

9 (2) The disproportionate impact climate change has had
10 and will have on traditionally marginalized people in
11 local communities and communities across the world, such
12 as in the Global South.

13 (3) The disproportionate challenges vulnerable and
14 traditionally marginalized people face in relation to
15 climate change. These challenges shall include, but are
16 not limited to, extreme events, health effects, food,
17 water, livelihood security, migration and forced
18 displacement, and the loss of cultural identity.

19 (4) Business, science, technology, engineering, and
20 mathematics opportunities associated with adapting to or
21 addressing the impacts of climate change.

22 (5) The importance of creating jobs and maintaining
23 livelihoods when responding to climate change and
24 fostering a sustainable economy.

25 (6) The role that companies and consumers can play in
26 addressing climate change in the present and in the

1 future.

2 (7) The current and future impact of climate change on
3 the local, State, national, and global level, as well as
4 the impact on individuals and communities.

5 (8) The difference between climate change mitigation
6 and adaptation to climate change.

7 (9) The role that institutions, industries,
8 corporations, governments, and citizens can play in
9 creating a sustainable environment.

10 (10) Current events, such as natural disasters, air
11 quality, and sea levels rising, and how they connect,
12 contribute, or are affected by climate change.

13 (11) How various sectors, including, but not limited
14 to, agriculture, industry, transportation, energy, and
15 commercial and residential emissions, influence climate
16 change.

17 (12) The absence of scientific controversy regarding
18 the basic facts of climate change despite political,
19 economic, or social disagreements about climate change.

20 (13) How the human relationship with the land varies
21 across cultures, world views, and philosophies.

22 (14) The relationship between climate change and
23 habitat loss, declines in biodiversity, land use,
24 pollution, populations, and overharvesting.

25 (15) The relationship between rapid industrialization,
26 carbon emissions, rapid temperature increases, and the

1 increasing frequency of environmental and ecological
2 impacts.

3 (16) Specific procedural steps a person, school, or
4 community can take to actively address climate change.

5 The State Board of Education may add other issues and
6 themes related to climate change to State learning standards
7 based on input from the working group.

8 (d) The State Superintendent of Education shall prepare
9 and make available to school boards instructional materials
10 and professional development training for educators that may
11 be used as guidelines for development of a unit of instruction
12 under this Section.

13 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
14 becoming law.