AB 2158 (Hoover, Lowenthal)

Outdoor Learning and Environmental Literacy Act of 2026

An evidence-based educational strategy that improves health, achievement, and equity for California's 5.8 million TK-12 students.

WHAT AB 2158 DOES

1 **Recognizes outdoor learning** as an effective, developmentally appropriate instructional method that improves

academic achievement | mental and physical health | student engagement

2 **Provides statewide guidance** for safe, equitable implementation while preserving local flexibility

3 **Supports local planning, professional learning, transportation, instructional materials, residential outdoor schools, partnerships with community-based organizations, and alignment of outdoor learning** with existing frameworks

LCAPs | Expanded Learning | Community Schools | high school redesign

4 **Establishes a three-year pilot program** to demonstrate impact and inform future policy

up to 6 sites | Northern, Central, Southern CA | contingent on future appropriation

5 **Ensures equitable access** to outdoor learning programming for

unduplicated pupils | pupils with disabilities | historically underserved communities

WHY SUPPORT

Positive alternative to screens
Supports student focus, engagement, and well-being. Complements the Legislature's work on youth mental health and screen time.

Modest fiscal impact
Permanent provisions identified as absorbable by Assembly Appropriations Committee. Pilot is contingent on future appropriation.

No new mandates
Builds on SB 720 (Allen, 2018). Preserves local control. Creates no new curriculum mandates.

Builds on California's work
Aligns with CDE Environmental Principles & Concepts, 30x30, Outdoors for All, Community Schools, Expanded Learning, climate resilience, and health equity.

MOMENTUM

8	9-0	Unanimous	77-0	600+
bipartisan, bicameral authors	unanimous Assembly Education Committee	bipartisan Assembly Appropriations Suspense File	bipartisan Assembly Floor vote	organizations and individuals signed on

WHY IT MATTERS FOR STUDENTS

20-min walk
In a park matches medication-level focus for children with ADHD.

$3 returned
For every $1 invested in green schoolyards.

Up to 69%
Lower risk of childhood myopia with regular outdoor time. Natural sunlight is key to healthy eye development.

Lower obesity, more activity, less screen time
Green space access is linked to healthier physical activity patterns and less screen time for children.

Stronger immune systems
Biodiverse play environments build immunity through healthy soil microbiome exposure.

Equity multiplier
Outdoor learning benefits girls more than boys, and students of color more than white students.

California Campaign for Outdoor Learning | a project of Ten Strands | caoutdoorlearning.org | May 2026
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