

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**, and **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**, and **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.

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.

MOMENTUM

8

bipartisan, bicameral authors

9-0

unanimous Assembly Education Committee

Unanimous

bipartisan Assembly Appropriations Suspense File

61-0

bipartisan Assembly Floor vote

600+

organizations and individuals signed on