



CAELI

District Environmental Leaders Community of Practice



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Agenda

- Welcome
- Getting Oriented to CAELI
- Building our Community
- Hearing from District Leaders
- Closing



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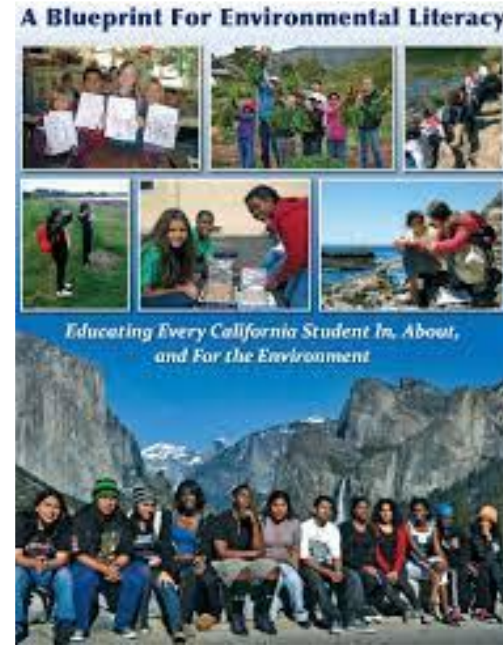
Welcome



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What is CAELI?

The [California Environmental Literacy Initiative \(CAELI\)](#), led by Ten Strands, works statewide to change the education system so that it supports environmental literacy with a focus on equity, inclusion, and cultural relevance for all students.



This collective impact network works with guidance from a leadership council composed of action oriented innovation hubs.



District COP Objectives

The core purpose of the District Community of Practice is to convene district leaders, educators, and support staff who are engaged in building environmental literacy and sustainability efforts within their schools. Through collaboration, shared learning, and resource exchange, this CoP supports district-wide innovation and alignment toward systems-level change.

Key outcomes of this district CoP include:

- Integration of environmental sustainability principles and practices into the district's operational, instructional, and cultural frameworks.
- Building the capacity of site and district leaders to implement whole-school sustainability models that touch campus, curriculum, community, and culture.



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2025-2026 Topics

Top topics from COP input in the registration:

- Outdoor Ed
- Green Ribbon program
- Funding streams for PD

Drop in the chat and other topics:

- That you want to learn about
- That you want to share with the COP this year



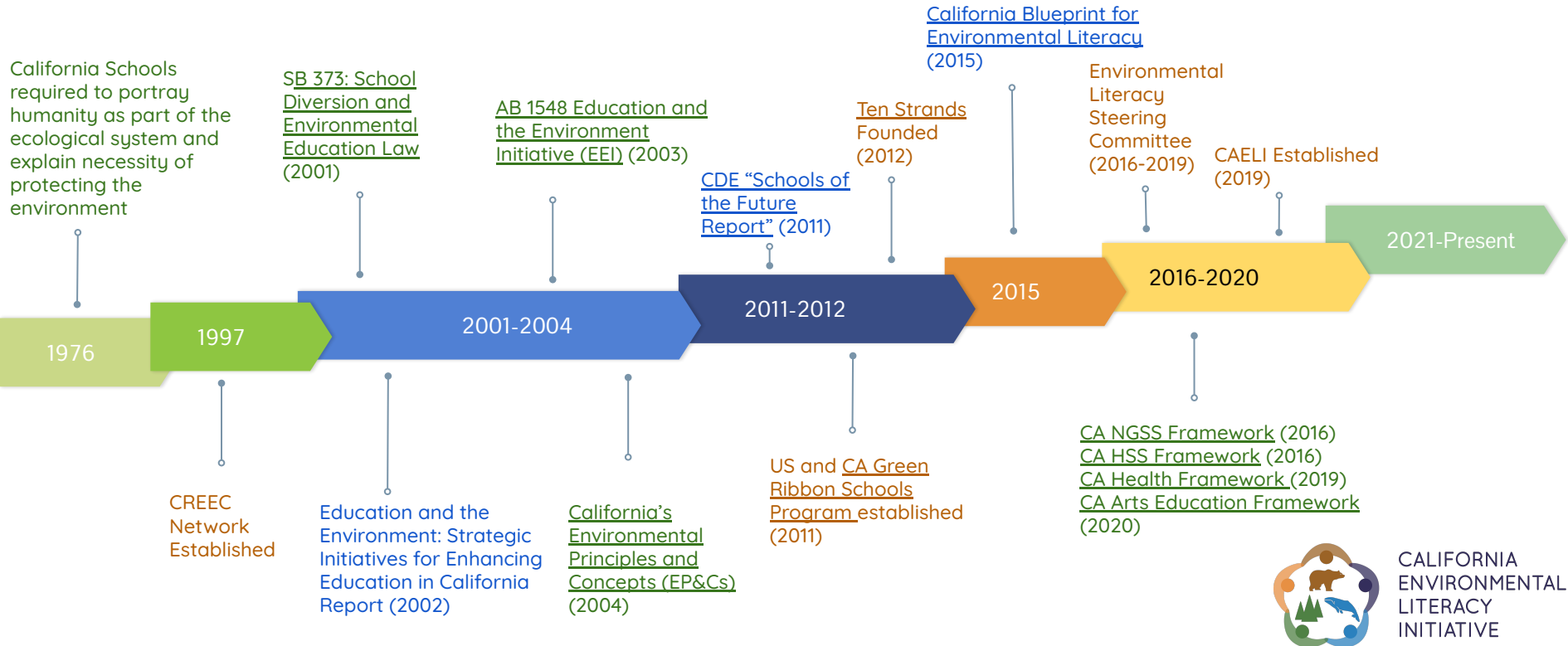


Getting Oriented to CAELI








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Abridged EE Timeline in California



CAELI History

Timeline	Details and Resources
2014-2015: Blueprint for Environmental Literacy 	<p>In 2014, former Superintendent Torlakson appointed an Environmental Literacy Task Force to create A Blueprint for Environmental Literacy, which was completed in September 2015.</p> <p><i>Resources to explore:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Blueprint for Environmental Literacy
2016-2018: Environmental Literacy Steering Committee (ELSC) 	<p>The co-chairs of the Blueprint for Environmental Literacy task force, and Ten Strands, were then authorized to create the Environmental Literacy Steering Committee (ELSC), with a mission to create and lead an implementation plan for California's Blueprint for Environmental Literacy. The ELSC came together in-person four times a year, and was organized into six Work Teams focused on: <i>i) Integrating environmental literacy into statewide education initiatives; ii) Raising funds for implementation over the short and long term; iii) Re-imagining and expand the effectiveness of the CREEC network; iv) leveraging regional and local Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) implementation and environmental literacy efforts; v) developing and implementing a communications plan and toolkit to increase support for environmental literacy; vi) Infusing environmental literacy planning into Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs).</i></p> <p><i>Resources to explore:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELSC Overview (archived webpage or PDF) ELSC Work Team Initiatives
2019: California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI) 	<p>Due to the success of the ELSC from 2016-2018, the California Department of Education (CDE) encouraged Ten Strands to continue the environmental literacy work under Superintendent Tony Thurmond. The initiative evolved into the California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI) in 2019 under Superintendent Tony Thurmond, with a focus on a three-pronged Theory of Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Create a supportive statewide context for environmental literacy. 2) Incrementally infuse environmental literacy into the existing education infrastructure.
2020-2021: California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI) Restructuring 	<p>Based on the desire to more fully center equity and to grow the number of people and representation of those directly involved with the initiative, CAELI began to re-envision the structure in early 2020. The COVID crisis and shift to virtual work accelerated this reimagining and Ten Strands facilitated a restructuring process that included the development of a new theory of action and a new governance structure based on shared leadership and self governance by summer 2021.</p> <p><i>Resources to explore:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAELI Governance Structure for Implementation in Fall 2021
2021-2024: California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI): Collective Action Model 	<p>Between Fall 2021 and Spring 2024, Ten Strands supported the pilot of CAELI under the newly revised CAELI Theory of Action, and collective action structure. The new structure required additional backbone support guidance including annual "CAELIenders", examples of collective action working group projects, a summary of annual goals and working group projects for innovation hubs and CAELI-Wide working groups ("snapshots"), processes for managing the use of funds on collective action projects, support for managing and recruiting CAELI members, and draft metrics. In 2023-24, CAELI expanded the collective action structure to include CAELI-Wide Working Groups that focus on different focus area initiatives (i.e. Green Ribbon, Metrics, etc.).</p> <p><i>Resources to explore:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAELI Theory of Action (Last revision Fall 2022) CAELI Governance (Last revised July 2023) CAELIender: 2022-23 and 2023-24 CAELI Working Group Project Examples (2022) Snapshots: 2022-23 Innovation Hub Snapshot and 2023-24 CAELI-Wide Working Group and Innovation Hub Snapshot Members: CAELI equity demographics report, and CAELI Membership Engagement Levels 2023-24 Work Plans, Budget, and Project Proposal Process



California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI) Overview

The California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI) is currently organized as a collective active network, with members organized into project initiative teams that strengthen the statewide ecosystem and support efforts to increase awareness, capacity, and agency for environmental literacy.

CAELI Meeting Cadence

- Co-Chairs: Weekly
- Executive Committee: Monthly
- Project Teams: *Usually monthly or as needed*
- CAELI Members: Quarterly



CAELI 2025-26 Governance Structure

CAELI CORE Leadership Team: Oversees and supports CAELI

- CAELI Project Director and Ten Strands Support Staff
- CAELI Co-Chairs

CAELI Project Initiative Leaders manage a CAELI Project Initiative and serve on the CAEL Executive Committee

CAELI Project Initiatives: *Communities of Practice, Webinars, Regional Meet-Ups, Podcasts, Toolkits, Fellowships, etc.*

CAELI Project Activators contribute to one or more CAELI Project Initiatives

CAELI Participants attend CAELI Events and Quarterlies

CAELI Guests contribute as one time experts



Ten Strands Backbone Support



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CAELI Membership and Participation Tiers

CAELI 2025-26 Membership and Participation Last Updated June 2025

Purpose and Overview: This document provides an overview of the different opportunities for participation in the California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI) network. All members are welcomed and encouraged to attend CAELI Quarterly meetings and CAELI Events.



Member Tier	Membership Overview
CAELI Participant 5 - 20 hours annually	CAELI Participants are people who participate in CAELI programs and networks, and are invited to CAELI Quarterly meetings. Examples of what a participant might attend includes the following: communities of practice, webinars, fellowships, networks, in-person meet-ups, etc.
CAELI Project Activator 20 - 40 hours annually	CAELI Project Activators contribute to one or more CAELI collective action projects - see 2025-26 projects here. Activators also participate in CAELI programs and networks, and should attend CAELI Quarterly meetings.
CAELI Project Initiative Leader 40 - 60 hours annually	CAELI Project Initiative Leaders commit to leading (or co-leading) a CAELI Collective Action Project during the CAELI season. Leadership responsibilities include project management (drafting and submitting a project proposal , planning and facilitating working group meetings, overseeing project budget, revising and providing final review, etc.). CAELI Project Initiative Leaders are also expected to attend a virtual CAELI Leadership Retreat in July (7/22/25), an in-person retreat in November (11/12/25), and to attend monthly CAELI Leadership meetings in between each Quarterly. CAELI Leaders can bill up to \$1,000 for this additional leadership time beyond their project leadership.
CAELI Core Leadership Team 60 - 100 hours annually for Co-Chairs	The CAELI Core Leadership Team is the highest level of engagement for a CAELI member and requires sustained and dedicated leadership to the collective action network. Contributors to this team include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAELI Project Director (<i>currently Ten Strands</i>): Oversees CAELI CAELI Support Staff (<i>currently Ten Strands</i>): Provides backbone support to CAELI core operations and project teams. CAELI Co-Chairs (<i>stipended position</i>): Work with the CAELI project director and CAELI support staff to provide governance oversight, set strategic direction, support CAELI project teams, and support planning and facilitation of CAELI virtual and in-person gatherings.
CAELI Guests 2-4 hours for guest speaking	CAELI Guests are invited to participate in or present at a CAELI event. Guests might include practitioner advisors (administrators, teachers, staff, students, partners, etc.) who support a webinar or community of practice.

CAELI is a shared leadership model with different levels of membership engagement.



CAELI 2025-26 Governance Structure

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Ten Strands Backbone Support



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CAELI 2025-26 Theory of Action Logic Model

INPUTS

CAELI Guiding Principles: Equity, Justice, and Accessibility; Scalability; Shared Leadership and Collaboration; Wide Range of Environment- Based Learning Experiences; Connection and Care

CAELI Members

CAELI Core Leadership Team
CAELI Project Leaders
CAELI Activators
CAELI Participants
CAELI Guests

CAELI Domains of Focus

Policy and Advocacy
Community Partners
Sustainability and Resilience
Teaching and Learning
Sustained Funding

Collective Action Projects and Programs

Capacity Building Activities: Meetings, Webinars, Communities of Practice, Resources, Tools, and other capacity building efforts.

Networking and Information Sharing: CAELI Newsletter, Quarterlies, Meetups, Webinars, Communities of Practice, and other information sharing and networking efforts.

OUTPUTS

Near-Term Outcomes

Strengthened Ecosystem: CBPs and educators are connected and collaborating statewide.

Increased Awareness: A broader, more diverse, group of educators and leaders are aware of the environmental literacy movement.

Increased Capacity: Building capacity of educators and community based partners (CBPs) to provide equitable, environmental and climate literacy and action opportunities for TK-12 students.

Increased Agency: School Communities are empowered to take collective action.

Long-Term Outcome

Environmental Literacy for ALL:
“An environmentally literate person has the capacity to act individually and with others to support ecologically sound, economically prosperous, and equitable communities for present and future generations. Through lived experiences and education programs that include classroom-based lessons, experiential education, and outdoor learning, students will become environmentally literate, developing the knowledge, skills, and understanding of environmental principles to analyze environmental issues and make informed decisions.”

CA Blueprint for Environmental Literacy (2015)

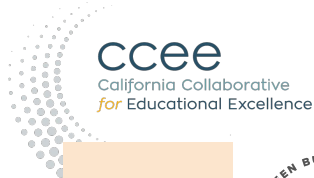
Ecosystem of Support for Driving Change



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We are a coalition of education, climate, health, youth, labor, civil rights, and business leaders and organizations. Join us in supporting:



Climate
Impacts in
Schools PD
Series



Campaign
for
Outdoor
Learning



CALIFORNIA
Schoolyard
Forest SystemSM



ECCLPs
Environmental and Climate
Change Literacy Projects



Climate Change and
Environmental Justice
Program



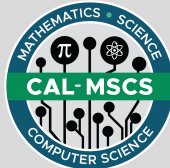
COEs with
Initiatives



**CREC
NETWORK**
A PROGRAM OF THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Subject matter initiatives that have subcommittees or focuses areas for environmental literacy



The Statewide Ecosystem for
Environmental Education has grown!



Building our Community



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Meet your CAELI District Leaders Community of Practice

1. Share your name, district you work in, your role
2. What is the climate of your district?
3. Do you have a strategic plan or system for structuring environmental literacy?



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What is Environmental Literacy?

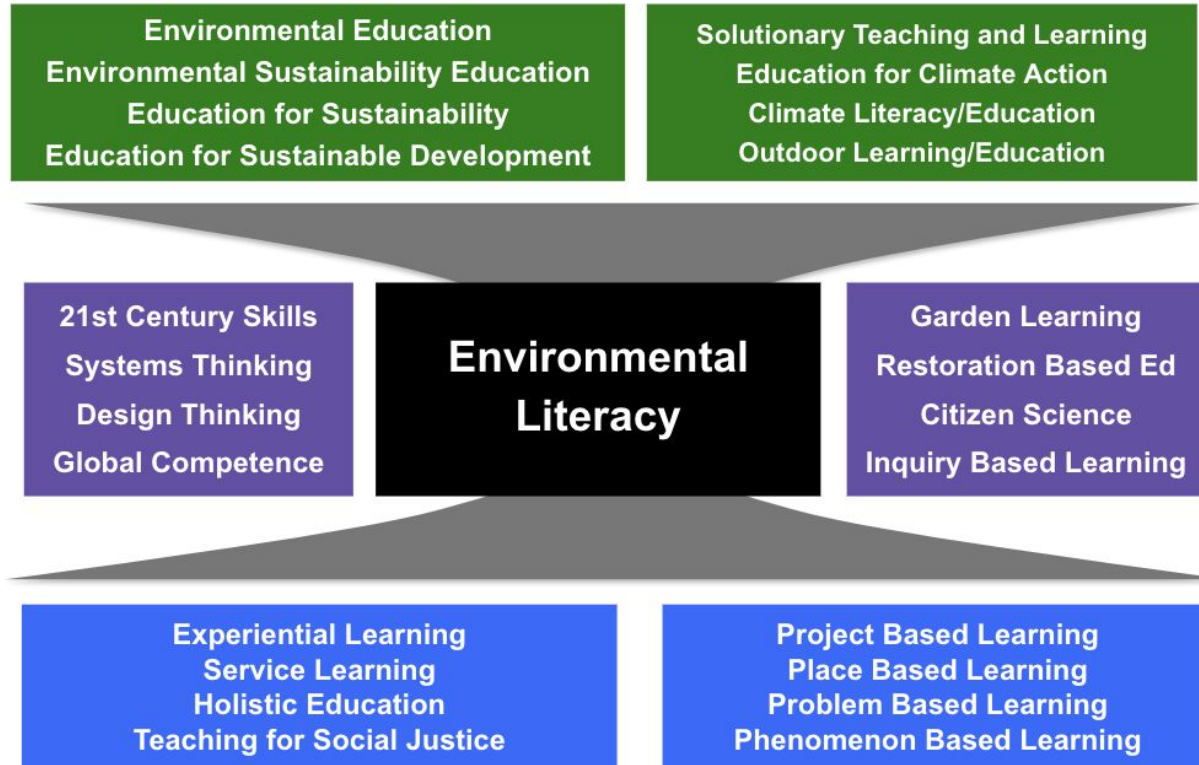


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What is Environmental Literacy?

There are A LOT of terms that are related or often used synonymously with “Environmental Literacy”

Which feel most relevant for your work?



What is Environmental Literacy?

Environmental Education

a process that increases public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues or problems. In doing so, it provides the public with the necessary skills to make informed decisions and take responsible action.

- *EPA 1990: National Environmental Education Act*

Environmental Literacy

“An environmentally literate person has the capacity to act individually and with others to support ecologically sound, economically prosperous, and equitable communities for present and future generations. Through lived experiences and education programs that include classroom-based lessons, experiential education, and outdoor learning, students will become environmentally literate, developing the knowledge, skills, and understanding of environmental principles to analyze environmental issues and make informed decisions.”

- CA Blueprint for Environmental Literacy (2015)

Environmental Literacy Resources

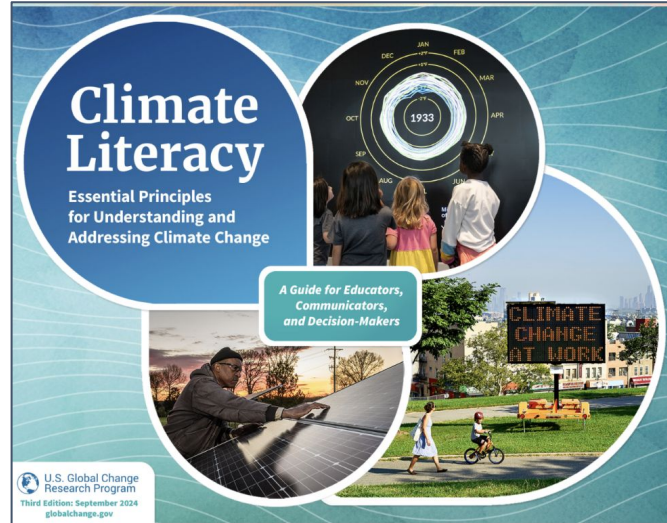
PRINCIPLE 1
People Depend on Natural Systems

PRINCIPLE 2
People Influence Natural Systems

PRINCIPLE 3
Natural Systems Change in Ways that People Benefit from and Can Influence

PRINCIPLE 4
There are no Permanent or Impermeable Boundaries that Prevent Matter from Flowing Between Systems

PRINCIPLE 5
Decisions Affecting Resources and Natural Systems are Complex and Involve Many Factors



Check out these additional resources, [here](#)!



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Blueprint Highlights: Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles

1 **Equity of Access:** We must achieve environmental literacy for all California students, not just a few.

2 **Sustainability and Scalability of Systems:** We must identify and commit to securing dedicated and sustained funding sources for environmental literacy and work within the current context of California's education transformation to harness momentum and create long-term impact.

3 **Collaborative Solutions:** Collaboration among the many stakeholders and community partners involved in environmental literacy is critical to implementing the recommendations contained in this document.

4 **Commitment to Quality:** Students must have access to high-quality learning experiences and materials inside and outside of the classroom that cultivate environmental literacy. Formal and informal educators must have access to high-quality professional learning opportunities.

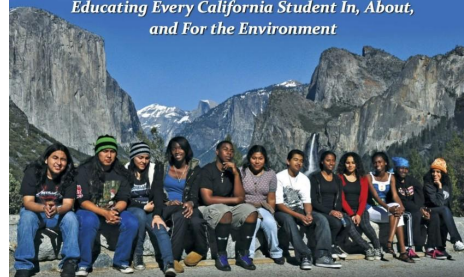
5 **Cultural Relevance and Competence:** The success of environmental literacy efforts in California will hinge upon culturally competent educators utilizing educational resources and approaches that are responsive to the culture and experiences of the state's diverse students and families.

6 **Variety of Learning Experiences:** Students can best develop environmental literacy through a combination of learning experiences in and out of the classroom, including outdoor and informal education, experiences in green school buildings and grounds, in students' local parks, and in residential outdoor science programs.

A Blueprint For Environmental Literacy



*Educating Every California Student In, About,
and For the Environment*



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District Leader Share Out



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Share Out

- Matthew Belasco - Pittsburg USD
- Neva Ayn Magalnick - Solana Beach SD
- Edward Hilton - Tahoe Truckee USD





Breakout Rooms



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Breakout Room

1. How does the work you heard about from other district leaders connect to/inspire your work?
2. What is one project that your district is focusing on that you would like to see more progress on?
3. What are the key initiatives that districts should focus on to make sure every teacher is connecting to the district's environmental literacy goals?





Closing



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Moving Forward

- What is one thing that you are going to dig into a bit more?
- Who is one person that you are going to connect with about environmental literacy?





[Please register here for all 2025-2026 meetings!](#)

All meetings are 11am-12:30pm

- October 3, 2025
- December 5, 2025
- February 6, 2026
- March 20, 2026
- May 8, 2026



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Current Projects with Upcoming Events

Equity Integration Project

- Professional Learning Series on the Equity Guidebook
- See [flyer](#) with topics, dates, time, and link to register
- First session is on Artificial Intelligence on September 16th

Webinar

- First Webinar on September 25th-Topic is Extreme Heat
- See [flyer](#) with more on the topic, date, time, and link to register

GCSHE Summit and Pre-Day Workshop

- Wednesday November 12th from 1-4pm at the Pasadena Conference Center
- Green California Schools and Higher Education Summit on November 13th: [\(info here\)](#)
- Submit to present a session here by October 10:
<https://form.jotform.com/230114807243143>



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY INITIATIVE

For CAELI Members

A CAELI Guide to Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, and Access

Professional Learning Series on the CAELI Equity Guidebook

Hosted & facilitated by the Equity Integration Project Team

Deepen your knowledge on some of the resources included in the Equity Guidebook and discuss how we work toward building equity-centered organizations.

When: Tuesdays from 3:00 - 4:30 pm

September 16, 2025 - Artificial Intelligence (special session)
December 16, 2025 - Ability & Access
March 17, 2026 - Social Emotional Learning
June 16, 2026 - Language Learning



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY INITIATIVE

The California Environmental Literacy Initiative invites you to attend a webinar on:

Rising Temperatures, Rising Risks: Addressing Extreme Heat Impacts on Children

Join us for a timely conversation on how extreme heat is affecting children across California. Learn what schools, districts, and community partners are doing to keep students safe and supported, and walk away with practical tools and strategies you can use to support your own school community.

When: September 25, 2025 4-5:30 PM PST

Register at: <https://bit.ly/CAELIVWebinarSeries2025-26>



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Join us at the Green California Schools and Higher Education (GCSHE) Summit!

Invitation for the GCSHE Summit Pre-Day Workshop:

- **Pasadena Conference Center**
- **Wednesday November 12th from 1-4pm**
- **Purpose:** Theme based conversation for CAELI members around the progress we have made on CAELI's near-term outcome goals (ex: strengthened ecosystem and increased agency) since the writing of the Blueprint for Environmental Literacy. Discussions will be equity informed and data-centered, and will focus on analyzing progress from multiple lenses (regional progress, urban-rural classification, enrollment size, and other equity focused demographic indicators). Participants will leave prepared to apply their thinking to strategies that advance CAELI's project initiatives, as well as advance progress in the school communities they currently serve.

Summit: Thu Nov 13th



*We want to see as many
CAELI Members
Attending as possible!*



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Reflection:

Please take a moment to fill out your feedback [here](#):



**District Environmental Leaders COP
2025-26 Reflection Form**

Thank you so much for attending the District Environmental Leaders Community of Practice. Please take a moment to provide us some feedback. Thank you :-)

* Indicates required question

[Visit the CAELI Partner Portal to connect with organizations in your area!](#)

[Check out our webinars!](#)



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A photograph of three students in a natural setting. One student is standing on a large rock, another is sitting on the rock, and a third is partially visible on the left. They appear to be engaged in an outdoor activity. The background shows a river and some trees.

Increasing access to impactful environment-based learning for all of California's TK-12 students

[LEARN MORE](#)

Sign up for the newsletter at

ca-eli.org