

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 128

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 68

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 128—Relative to Living Schoolyard Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 16, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 128, Ting. Living Schoolyard Month.

This measure would designate the month of May as Living Schoolyard Month, and would urge the State Department of Education, school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools to continue to prioritize the design and construction of student-accessible green space on school campuses and to integrate use of this space into the teaching of standards-based curriculum.

WHEREAS, Urban development often disconnects communities from natural systems, wildlife, and seasonal changes; and

WHEREAS, Environmental sustainability has become a high priority in urban planning and design, and should be incorporated in construction and renovation of schools; and

WHEREAS, On-campus green space designs have environmental benefits such as rainwater collection, urban carbon and runoff sequestration, air quality improvement, and ecological resiliency; and

WHEREAS, Schools can benefit their surrounding communities through thoughtful design and use of their grounds, paying mind to local ecological, social, and cultural context; and

WHEREAS, The amount of time the average American child spends outdoors and distance traveled from the home unsupervised are in constant decline; and

WHEREAS, Childhood obesity and its related health issues have become a public policy concern in the United States and California, particularly in low-income communities; and

WHEREAS, Children spend a significant portion of their day on their school campuses, amounting to at least 840 instructional hours per year from grades 1 to 3, inclusive, and up to 1,080 hours for grades 9 to 12, inclusive; and

WHEREAS, An ecological schoolyard setting provides a peaceful, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasant environment for students, particularly for those students who lack the desire or ability to engage in competitive, fast-paced, or more structured activities; and

WHEREAS, Ecological schoolyard play encourages collaborative and cooperative play, reducing the aggression that occurs on traditional playgrounds; and

WHEREAS, An on-campus green space, such as a school garden, is a fundamental component of a school environment intended to include and empower students, giving them a sense of place and community; and

WHEREAS, Schools are devoted to nurturing each child’s physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development and ability to assess challenging situations and make intelligent choices; and

WHEREAS, Children should be given the opportunity to reflect and embrace their local ecological, social, and cultural context in both recreational and instructional settings; and

WHEREAS, Outdoor classrooms provide clearer context for standards-based instruction in life and physical sciences, health and nutrition, and social science; and

WHEREAS, Outdoor activity is essential to learning, health, and the overall quality of student life; and

WHEREAS, The Instructional School Gardens Program has been established by the Legislature for the promotion, creation, and support of instructional school gardens; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature designates the month of May as Living Schoolyard Month and urges the State Department of Education, school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools to continue to prioritize the design and construction of student-accessible green space on school campuses and to integrate use of this space into the teaching of standards-based curriculum; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.