



Friends of Outdoor School
PO Box 82684 · Portland OR 97282
FriendsOfOutdoorSchool.org
IRS TAX ID# 27-4657069

April 6, 2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 NE Court St. NE,
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education:

We are writing today to urge your support for full funding for Oregon's statewide Outdoor School program in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission budget. By funding the program at the current service level amount of \$46.8 million, the legislature ensures that ALL fifth and sixth graders in Oregon have the opportunity to participate in up to a week of hands-on learning, outside of the classroom.

The thousands of supporters, volunteers, advocates, and donors of Friends of Outdoor School envision a day when ALL Oregon students attend a week of Outdoor School. As the lead charity in Oregon supporting Outdoor School and the over 50,000 students who attend each year, we know that Outdoor School provides children of all abilities and learning styles the opportunity to build a deeper understanding of the natural systems and resources that sustain our communities, our state, and our planet. In fact, students who often find classrooms difficult, discover they are able to easily learn and grow at Outdoor School.

Research confirms that learning outdoors helps students develop strong critical-thinking skills, increase their interest and motivation for school, improve in-school behavior, and build strong, lasting relationships between students and teachers. The benefits of Outdoor School last well beyond the week-long program equipping students to be respectful of our lands and creating a lifelong appreciation for Oregon's unique heritage and natural resources.

Our board and constituents understand that Outdoor School is a once-in-a-lifetime, transformational experience at a critical time of a child's development. It is also one of the few shared experiences that all Oregon students have. More than just learning about science in the field, students also learn about themselves and other students from different places building a sense of connection to each other, the land, and their identity as Oregonians.

In 2017, the legislature allocated partial funding of \$24 million to the formation of this important statewide program. With these funds, 14,482 additional students and

Our Vision: Every Oregon student attends a week of Outdoor School.

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187 new schools attended Outdoor School for the first time. Because the program is most effective when offered for a full week, many schools expanded their previous attendance because of state funding, allowing more students than ever to attend a full week of Outdoor School. But even with these additions, Oregon's fifth and sixth grade students still face barriers to participation, including access to the week-long programs that can provide the most transformative experience.

Full funding of \$46.8 million is necessary to provide an opportunity for ALL students to experience a transformative week at Outdoor School, regardless of income, geography, background, ethnicity, or ability. I urge you to support adequately funding M99 Outdoor School for All in the 2017-19 biennium.

Thank you for enthusiastically supporting full funding for Outdoor School! You are making a difference to tens of thousands of Oregon students every year.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kim Silva". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "S".

Kim Silva
Executive Director



1221 SW Yamhill St., Suite 100
Portland, OR 97205
503.227.6846
www.grayff.org

April 8, 2019

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

On behalf of the Gray Family Foundation, we urge the legislature to provide the full \$46.8 million in funding for Oregon's statewide Outdoor School program for the next biennium.

Outdoor School provides children of all abilities and learning styles the opportunity to build a deeper understanding of the natural systems and resources that sustain us. Research confirms that learning outdoors helps students develop strong critical-thinking skills, increase their interest and motivation for school, improve their in-school behavior, and build strong, lasting relationships between students and teachers. The benefits of Outdoor School last well beyond the weeklong program equipping students to be respectful of the environment and in their community.

Prior to the historic passage of Measure 99, many students across Oregon were not able to participate in Outdoor School. Gray Family Foundation historically played a significant role in trying to fill funding gaps, recognizing the important value the shared Oregon experience of Outdoor School offered students. But, equitable access for all students cannot be achieved without consistent state funding for this seminal middle school experience. With state funding to schools, Gray Family Foundation has been able to focus our outdoor school support on helping new programs get started, improving curriculum, and training and support to ensure culturally responsive programming.

A 2017/18 pilot evaluation of six outdoor school experiences supported by the Gray Family Foundation reinforces the substantial value which access to Outdoor School offers students and communities. The study highlights **significant gains and influence** in key areas including:

- Educational outcomes related to STEM, natural history, social studies, and geography;
- Social awareness and relationship skills (social emotional skills);
- Discipline and classroom management behaviors.

Our economy and future rely on supporting the next generation to develop the skills, knowledge, and motivation to protect the health of our communities and natural resources. Gray Family Foundation strongly supports the continued investment in Outdoor School as an essential experience for ALL students in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Gray Family Foundation Board of Directors

Janet Webster, Newport
Randy Schild, Tillamook
Charles F. Sams, III, Pendleton
Corrine Oishi, Forest Grove

Kristin Walrod, Portland
Maria Elena Campisteguy, Portland
Maria Ramos Underwood, Medford
Nancy Bales, Executive Director

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 NE Court St. NE,
Salem, OR 97301

April 9, 2019

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

My name is Jack Gray and I'm a lifelong farmer from Noti, Oregon. I'm writing to urge you to support the full \$46.8 million in funding for Oregon's statewide Outdoor School program for the next biennium.

Life in Oregon is grounded in a respect and understanding of our natural world. As a farmer this fact is made abundantly clear to me every day but for many, many Oregonians our connection to and dependence upon the natural world is not obvious. Outdoor School is a great way to build that connection to our natural resource base and to educate the next generation.

Research has shown that learning outdoors goes far beyond experiencing nature. It increases critical thinking skills, overall school motivation as well as many social skills. And for some kids it can be a truly transformational event.

For me one of the most compelling arguments for full funding is to make sure that all students regardless of race, background, income, etc. get the opportunity to attend Outdoor School. We need to create unifying experiences to help unite us as a people. Full funding for Outdoor School will help ensure that all students passing through the fifth and sixth grades will have this exceptional common experience.

Please support the full \$46.8 million in funding for Oregon's Outdoor School program for the next biennium.

Thank you very much,
Jack Gray
Winter Green Farm
Noti, Oregon

Funding for “Outdoors for All”

Chairs Fredericks and McLain and members of the Committee

I’m Clair Klock, resident of Corbett, OR, retired farmer and semi-retired urban and small farms conservation specialist.

I and my wife Beverly **urge your full support of \$46 million** for the funding of the Outdoors School program for elementary school students in the State of Oregon. Before and during the farming and natural resources jobs, I was involved in the Multnomah ESD program for almost 20 years in a variety of positions.

I have seen elementary and the high school leaders **go into science related jobs and become school teachers as result of their ODS experience**. I have seen countless meek high school sophomores develop confidence to stand and speak in front of 120 people. I have seen teacher marvel at the abilities of **a “problem student” that shoots to the top of the class** when exposed to the outdoor sciences and the residential ODS environment

Oregon Outdoors School has a positive impact that is felt worldwide. I have had adults approach me not only in Portland, but Denver, San Francisco, Seattle and Santiago, Chile and all points in between. All raved about the positive effects of ODS and thanked me.

I have observed other programs over the last 40 years and will add that the **one week (5.5 day) experience is the best**. This is because the student are getting used to the surrounding the first day and the last day is center on a final wrap up and traveling home with 4 full days of instruction.

All the students in Oregon deserve this experience.

Thank you for listening

Priscilla Ing, retired public school teacher and outdoor school co-director and recent ODS Advisory Committee member...

I am here to speak to the benefits and impact that outdoor school can have on Oregon students at all levels *and to ask for full funding.*

As research has shown, learning by doing reaches more learners, of any age, than all other approaches; and outdoor school is a viable, hands-on approach. Students who do not shine within the four walls of the traditional, academic only classroom, often find opportunities to do so at outdoor school. It is so gratifying to see a behavior challenged, ADHD kid, for the first time wade in a stream, gently use a net to temporally capture small aquatic life forms, record them in his journal, and then beam with pride.

Outdoor school reaches beyond accentuating and scaffolding the academic strand of what public education provides. *It* also meets the needs of the whole child with social and life skills. The simple act of sitting at a camp dining room table and eating family style, saying 'please pass the tatter tots' and 'thank you', and sitting through a two course meal (way beyond the hurried 15 minute cafeteria time at school) is a first time learning experience for many more students than you might imagine.

As a former Title I Coordinator, I am speaking on behalf of the schools with populations of over 60% of their student body on Free & Reduced lunch, and districts too small to add outdoor education to their already strained annual budgets. Ironically, schools and school districts that have not found it financially feasible to provide outdoor education experiences are often the ones whose students would benefit the most.

Outdoor school reaches beyond the 5th and 6th Grade classroom. The high school councilors who are part of most outdoor schools are also impacted by their experiences

while preparing to guide both academic and camp living groups. Counseling and teaching responsibilities have been known to keep some high school students focused enough to graduate. These same experiences have also impacted high school students' career choices.

You want to increase the graduation rate? You want an educated populous as voters in the state of Oregon? Investing in Outdoor Schools at the elementary school level is one positive step toward those goals.

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means; Subcommittee on Education.

I'm a constituent of Sen. Frederick's district, an advocate of Oregon Outdoor School, and someone who personally benefited from outdoor school in Florence, Oregon 30 years ago. I also represent the disabilities communities on the Oregon Outdoor School Advisory Board. Since my 6th grade days I have acquired a spinal cord injury that makes access to the outdoors very difficult. Equity in the education system begins with full funding and strong leadership. I am requesting you support full funding of \$46.8M for ODS for the next biennium so that more students with disabilities can participate in outdoor school. Outdoor School provides vast enrichment to the lives and education of thousands of youngsters.

Kind regards,

West Livaudais, MPH
Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection
west@oregonsci.org
503-621-6321

04/09/2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 NE Court St. NE,
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

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As a high school student, I devoted over 700 hours to being a student leader at Camp Howard. Through this program, I was exposed to the brightness and incredible plethora of skills sixth grade students are able to express and recognize when given the opportunity. For most of these kids, they were able to express their brightness and potential through the exercises of community building and learning ODS provided.

Over five years ago, as a junior in high school, I was able to speak at an event in support of Outdoor School funding—from the perspective of a student from a low-income district in East Portland. Below is my speech—a message that still resonates with me.

Hi, my name is Anca, or, at outdoor school: "Cosmo."

I'm a high school junior and I've been a student leader 3 times, so far, at Howard outdoor school. The sixth graders I've worked with have undoubtedly mesmerized me time and time again. Outdoor school creates a safe space for students to be themselves, build relationships and help one another confront the very real challenges of being a kid today.

Just this past fall, I bonded with a student who was dealing with the death of her cousin who had happened to also have been named Cosmo. While I was completely surprised and taken aback, I was also mesmerized by how—at outdoor school—I could so quickly help this kid adjust to a particularly awkward and difficult situation.

At outdoor school, you're never alone. That's my favorite part, and what I think a 6th grader needs most out of outdoor school. Sure you learn about the natural world and how your science classes apply to real life—but you also build community. You always have a song to sing, a game to play, a friend to talk to.

Ever since my 6th grade year, I have been reminiscent of the community that I helped build at outdoor school, an inclusive and supportive community that I continue to be a part of.

This is why outdoor school is so gravely important for both sixth graders and student leaders: because it shows kids that they can be themselves and support one another. It involves kids in first-hand building and being part of a community, one that is without judgment. We are the future and at outdoor school we have the opportunity to literally step outside and see the world—the communities—we want to build together.

Full funding of \$46.8 million is necessary to provide an opportunity for ALL students to experience a transformative week at Outdoor School, regardless of income, geography, background, ethnicity, or ability. I urge you to support adequately funding M99 Outdoor School for All in the 2017-19 biennium.

Sincerely,

Anca Matica

anca.matica@yahoo.com

943 Hilyard St. Eugene, OR Apt 13, 97401

503-481-1613



Oregon Museum of
Science and Industry
1945 SE Water Avenue
Portland Oregon 97214
503 797 4000

omsi.edu

Date 4/15/19

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 NE Court St. NE,
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

I am writing today to urge your support for full funding for Oregon's statewide Outdoor School program in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission budget. By funding the program at the current service level amount of \$46.8 million, the legislature ensures that all fifth and sixth graders in Oregon have the opportunity to participate in up to a week of hands-on learning, outside of the classroom.


Outdoor School provides children of all abilities and learning styles the opportunity to build a deeper understanding of the natural systems and resources that sustain us. Research confirms that learning outdoors helps students develop strong critical-thinking skills, increase their interest and motivation for school, improve in-school behavior, and build strong, lasting relationships between students and teachers. The benefits of Outdoor School last well beyond the weeklong program equipping students to be respectful of the environment and creating a lifelong appreciation for Oregon's unique heritage and natural resources.

The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) has been providing Outdoor School programming since the early 1970's. In that time OSI's outdoor school program has continued to grow, providing more and more students, from across the state, the opportunity to participate in this impactful program. This funding has enabled over 6,700 students the opportunity to explore and learn about the natural world, specifically in Eastern Oregon and on the Oregon coast at OSI's Outdoor School sites. These students have all had the chance to experience that "WOW" moment where the lessons in a classroom truly come to life in an immersive outdoor environment. OSI's outdoor school program has also enabled schools from Eastern Oregon and the Portland Metro to be learning side by side at OSI's Outdoor School program, which is another impactful benefit of this funding.

In 2017, the legislature allocated partial funding of \$24 million to the formation of this important statewide program. With these funds, 14,482 students and 187 schools attended Outdoor School for the first time. Additionally, many schools expanded their previous attendance, allowing more students than ever to attend a full week of Outdoor School. But even with these additions, Oregon's fifth and sixth grade students still face barriers to participation, including access to the week-long programs that can provide the most transformative experience.

Full funding of \$46.8 million is necessary to provide an opportunity for ALL students to experience a transformative week at Outdoor School, regardless of income, geography, background, ethnicity, or ability. I urge you to support adequately funding M99 Outdoor School for All in the 2017-19 biennium.

Sincerely,



Nancy Stueber
President/CEO

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means; Subcommittee on Education.

We are writing in support of full funding for the Oregon statewide Outdoor School program. When we first moved to Oregon in the late 1960s we were thrilled to hear about the weeklong outdoor school that all sixth graders were able to attend and as young teachers at the time we could easily appreciate how the students who had this experience were much more literate in the natural world, and much more interested in environmental challenges and policies. As educators we are also deeply aware that studying in a green environment has educational and psychological benefits as well.

As supporters of Outdoor School over the years we have also seen how the experience of living in a group setting away from home also begins to prepare the students for individual responsibility as adult members of a society, fostering the values of sharing duties, cooperating in projects, working out disagreements that contribute in the long term to good citizenship.

We personally find that a full week Outdoor School program is deeply valuable to Oregon's students and also that for those of us who value Oregon as a quality environment to live and play in, it is a wonderful investment in our common future. Voters in recent elections have resoundingly approved increased allocations for Outdoor School. While 80+% of Oregon 5th or 6th graders now are able to participate in outdoor education, only about 20% have access to a full week program. In our minds, the provision for a full week program for every Oregon 6th grader will reap immeasurable benefits for our common community, from better scientific education, greater environmental consciousness, though enhanced mental health and improved social skills. We feel these benefits are well worth the price of fully funding the program at 46 million dollars.

We therefore urge your committee to recommend full funding of the Outdoor School program for \$46 million this year. Thank you so much for your studious attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Reagan MD
Bonnie Reagan MD RN

4/10/19

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 NE Court St. NE,
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

I am writing today to urge your support for full funding for Oregon's statewide Outdoor School program in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission budget. By funding the program at the current service level amount of \$46.8 million, the legislature ensures that all fifth and sixth graders in Oregon have the opportunity to participate in up to a week of hands-on learning, outside of the classroom.

Outdoor School provides children of all abilities and learning styles the opportunity to build a deeper understanding of the natural systems and resources that sustain us. Research confirms that learning outdoors helps students develop strong critical-thinking skills, increase their interest and motivation for school, improve in-school behavior, and build strong, lasting relationships between students and teachers. The benefits of Outdoor School last well beyond the weeklong program equipping students to be respectful of the environment and creating a lifelong appreciation for Oregon's unique heritage and natural resources.

Both of my daughters, now 25 & 29 years old, participated in Outdoor School as 6th graders & then volunteered as student leaders all through high school. These experiences steered them onto college degrees in Environmental Studies.

In 2017, the legislature allocated partial funding of \$24 million to the formation of this important statewide program. With these funds, 14,482 students and 187 schools attended Outdoor School for the first time. Additionally, many schools expanded their previous attendance, allowing more students than ever to attend a full week of Outdoor School. But even with these additions, Oregon's fifth and sixth grade students still face barriers to participation, including access to the week-long programs that can provide the most transformative experience. Full funding of \$46.8 million is necessary to provide an opportunity for ALL students to experience a transformative week at Outdoor School, regardless of income, geography, background, ethnicity, or ability.

I urge you to support adequately funding M99 Outdoor School for All in the 2017-19 biennium.

Sincerely,

Trish Claffey
503 287 6209
2527 NE Clackamas St.
Portland, Or 97232

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means; Subcommittee on Education.

As a high school school counselor married to a middle school science teacher, I experienced the transformative powers of Outdoor School for both student leaders and participants.

Many of my high school students left for their first Outdoor School week anticipating a fun break from the school routine, but they returned as leaders with heightened commitments to their environment. After their first student leader experience they applied each season to return.

My husband has taken many groups of 6th graders on their maiden Outdoor School voyage, and most poignantly shared stories of teary-eyed children struggling to leave their homes for the first time. These same children also cried on the bus ride home after their Outdoor School experience - because they didn't want to leave it behind.

Many children experience nature for the first time at Outdoor School, and develop an understanding of their critical relationship to it. They take ownership of their earth in a way they hadn't before. Perhaps as importantly, they experience friendship and bonding with their peers - some for the first time. The Outdoor School program nurtures community building as carefully as it does environmental education.

There is a certain magic that takes place at Outdoor School, and it should be available to all students throughout the state, regardless of income levels or accessibility to funding sources. At a time when our planet becomes more and more strained, Outdoor School is a critical catalyst to creating environmental stewards.

My husband had to return home in the middle of the night, mid-week into an Outdoor School stint, for the birth of our daughter back in 2005. She was transformed by her Outdoor School experience in 2017. Now in 8th grade, she can't wait to be a high school Outdoor School counselor. My husband and I support ODS financially, but we know it takes a lot more than individual donations to create a sustainable, stable program that will truly thrive.

Thank you for your efforts to fully fund ODS.

Wendy & Ward Ferguson
Portland, Oregon

April 10, 2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 NE Court St. NE,
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

A vibrant future for our state relies on today's youth, and it relies on living and working sustainably on the land of our state. For these reasons, **I urge you to support full funding of \$46.8 million for statewide Outdoor School** in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission budget.

I grew up in a school district that sent me to Outdoor School, and it was the foundation of my commitment to environmental stewardship. **Research confirms that learning outdoors helps students develop strong critical-thinking skills, increase their interest and motivation for school, improve in-school behavior, and build strong, lasting relationships between students and teachers.** The benefits of Outdoor School last well beyond the weeklong program equipping students to be respectful of the environment and creating a lifelong appreciation for Oregon's unique heritage and natural resources.

Access to this important program must be afforded to every single student in the state, regardless of their income or their school district. I appreciate the legislature's past partial funding that helped with the formation of this important statewide program, allowing more students than ever to attend a full week of Outdoor School. But even with these additions, too many of Oregon's fifth and sixth grade students still face barriers to participation, including access to the week-long programs that can provide the most transformative experience.

Full funding of \$46.8 million is essential to provide an opportunity for ALL students to experience a transformative week at Outdoor School, regardless of income, geography, background, ethnicity, or ability. **I urge you to support adequately funding M99 Outdoor School for All in the 2017-19 biennium.**

Sincerely,



Maggie Starr
6320 SE 84th Place
Portland, OR 97266



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13979 SW Millikan Way
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April 5, 2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 NE Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

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We were big supporters of Measure 99 in 2017. Christine was one of the chief petitioners. We want to see the full implementation of the bill. That is what we expected Oregon to do and that is what the Oregonians who voted for it expected.

Full funding of \$46.8 million is necessary to provide an opportunity for ALL students to experience a transformative week at Outdoor School, regardless of income, geography, background, ethnicity, or ability. We urge you to support adequately funding M99 Outdoor School for All in the 2017-19 biennium.

Sincerely,



Christine Vernier



David L. Vernier

4/11/2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 NE Court St. NE,
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

I am writing today to ask you to support full funding for Oregon's statewide Outdoor School program in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission budget. All 5th and 6th graders in the state of Oregon deserve access to the incredible resource of Outdoor School—full funding on \$46.8 million will make this possible.

I experienced Outdoor School as a 6th grade student in 2003, and returned as a student leader for 7 weeks during high school. The program shaped and changed me in extraordinary ways. As a sixth grader, I built stronger relationships with my classmates at my new middle school and uncovered a love for science and the environment that followed me back to the classroom. As a high school student, I developed leadership skills and a love of teaching that have guided my path to become an educator. Above all, I gained a respect and love for the unique landscape of our state and a desire to protect and care for the natural world that has become a key value in my life. The benefits of Outdoor school last well beyond the weeklong program, and I am eager for all Oregon students to experience them.

In 2017, the legislature allocated partial funding of \$24 million to the formation of this important statewide program. With these funds, 14,482 students and 187 schools attended Outdoor School for the first time. Additionally, many schools expanded their previous attendance, allowing more students than ever to attend a full week of Outdoor School. But even with these additions, Oregon's fifth and sixth grade students still face barriers to participation, including access to the week-long programs that can provide the most transformative experience.

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I'd love to speak with you more about why this program is so essential for our students and our state. Please feel free to get in touch.

Sincerely,

Joellen Sweeney

1112 NW 15th St Apt B207
Gresham, OR 97030