



May 4, 2021

Oregon House General Government Committee

Dear Chair Wilde, Vice Chairs Leif and Lively, and Representatives Valderama and Zika,

As supporters of Washington County Kids, a collaborative of over 150 individuals and organizations dedicated to increasing awareness of the need for access to out of school time (OST-early childhood, after school, and summer) programs, we urge you to support the passage of SB299 to add children's service districts to the 28 currently allowed special districts.

Even before the pandemic it was very difficult and costly to obtain quality early childhood, after school and summer care for children. The pandemic has exacerbated this problem, particularly for working women and BIPOC communities of color. We all want to have a thriving economy but that will simply not happen without more support for OST programs to allow parents and guardians to go back to work knowing their children are safe and engaged in positive activities when they are not in school.

Research shows that OST programs promote academic success, higher graduation rates, positive behavior and safety, and good citizenship ([After School Alliance, 2014](#); [Vandell, et. al., 2020](#)). Quality child care and after school programs have long term effects on graduation and eventual career success ([Parks, 2000](#)). By the time they reach 5th grade children who are economically disadvantaged who do not participate in summer programs average 3 years behind their middle-income peers who do participate ([Rand, 2015](#)). A meta-analysis of 213 OST programs found that participation significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance, resulting in an 11 percentile point gain in achievement ([Durlak and Weissberg, 2011](#)). In addition, most programs include some federally-subsidized nutrition which increases overall health and the ability to function in school.

These programs also impact the workforce. Women who utilize quality out of school time care have fewer absences and earn more. In addition, the families benefit by reduced costs that free up a significant part of the family's hard-earned income to pay for housing, food, and medical care ([McCluskey, 2018](#)).

Funds are inadequate for these programs or may not be sustainable. A limited amount of federal and state funding is available for early childhood programs but proposals are being considered for large increases in proposed budgets. The State passed the SSA act which includes the possibility to fund after school and summer programs but it is unlikely to happen since most districts have opted to use the funds for counselors and decreasing in-class sizes. A limited amount of pass-through federal money is proposed but it is unclear how long it will be in place. Most counties do not allocate any of their funds to these programs. Some cities provide limited funding. Non-profit programs exist but they are not available in all geographic areas. Access is difficult for many children due to wait lists, fees, and/or transportation barriers. Some recreation programs exist but they usually require additional fees and they may be difficult to access due to the same barriers. Not all children are interested in recreation programs or able to participate due to physical limitations.

SB299 does not ask for State funds. It only allows citizens to sign petitions to organize children's service districts in a democratic manner to serve the children of their community.

As concerned Oregonians, we urge you to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Katie Riley, Ed.D.
President, Washington County Kids
250 NE Hillwood Dr.
Hillsboro, OR 97124

Additional Supporters

Individuals

Lisa Allen, Member, Hillsboro School Board, and educator

Sherri Burks, Child Care Manager

Michael Coiner, Hillsboro

Amy Corbett, Chief Program Officer, Metropolitan Family Service

Kathy Cvetko, Founder/Owner, Math Gamers LLC

Alexander Diaz-Rios, Educator and PCC Board of Directors

Don Domes, Licensed Tax and Small Business Consultant, Technology Education Teacher, Retired

Sean Garland, Sherwood City Councilor

Shari Getz, Founder, Owner, Shari Getz Creative and Creativity HQ

Dan Goldman, Superintendent, NWRES D

Kate Grandusky, Member, Forest Grove School Board

Michael Harper, former Blazer

Kathleen Hersh, Garden Home

Penney Hoodenpyle, Reedville and Hillsboro School Districts Board Member (1984 to 1999)

Tom Hughes, former Metro President, former Mayor of Hillsboro

Alissa Keny-Guyer, former State Representative and former member, Portland Children's Levy

Greg Malinowski, former Washington County Commissioner

Jonella Malinowski, Washington County

Luann Pelton, retired Accounting Manager

Christen Sacco, Tualatin City Councilor

Susan I. Stoltenberg, Executive Director, YWCA of Greater Portland

Lianne Thompson, Clatsop County Commissioner

Organizations

Adelante Mujeres

Boys and Girls Clubs of the Portland Metropolitan Area

Centro Cultural de Washington County

Children's Funding Project

Children's Institute

Clackamas Women's Services

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

Forest Grove School Board

League of Women Voters

Metropolitan Family Service

Native Stand (OHSU/PSU School of Public Health)

Northwest Family Services

Northwest Regional Education Services District

Neighbors for Kids (Lincoln County)

Oregon Public Health Association

Our Children Oregon

Parrot Creek Child and Family Service

Ready Nation

YWCA of Greater Portland

Willamette Chicano Alliance

(and many more who have submitted separate testimony)