

April 20, 2021

Dear Oregon Legislators:

I'm proud to work in a state that has made Outdoor School a priority for every student. As the Oregon Science Project Director and Rural STEAM Leadership Network Facilitator, I have seen firsthand over the past year how Oregon's Outdoor School providers are uniquely positioned to respond to rapid changes and varying district needs. Several Outdoor School providers provided new digital resources for students to engage with the outdoors nearby, and in doing so supported Oregon's teachers who were struggling to engage students during comprehensive distance learning and hybrid learning. It was Outdoor School who first talked about new ways of using outdoor spaces and helped others around the state recognize the importance of place-based education during times of COVID-19 restrictions. It has been inspiring to link these providers with classroom teachers through the networks of the Rural Learning Collaboratives where Outdoor School was able to introduce teachers to new teaching approaches focused on the outdoors.

The equity-focused innovations of these providers have impacted the way educators see outdoor school, how teachers think of engaging with outdoor school, and these innovations have also provided a whole new approach to connecting students to the outdoors all across Oregon - whether they can physically visit or not. This includes engaging adult caregivers of students and focusing on students' social and emotional well being. I believe that as a result of being such a resource and ally of teachers during a year of pandemic teaching, that Outdoor School has increased in its relevance and partnership with districts across the state - especially in rural and remote areas.

Thank you for supporting Outdoor School funding, and I look forward to what these creative and exceptional Outdoor School Providers are able to do with continued funding through this next biennium and beyond. I am hopeful for what a combination of residential visits combined with virtual access can mean for the future Oregon students and their interest in stewardship of this state.

Thank you for ensuring all of Oregon's students have access to the outdoor spaces in this great state!

Sincerely,



Cristina Trecha  
Oregon Science Project Director  
Rural Learning Collaborative Facilitator

