

February 5, 2024

RE: HB 4082

Distinguished Legislators,

My name is Meghan Zook, and I am the Director for the Community Schools Department at Metropolitan Family Service.

I am writing on behalf of Metropolitan Family Service (MFS), a culturally responsive, multicultural nonprofit community-based organization that has been active in the Portland Metropolitan areas since 1950. We want to convey our support for HB 4082 relating to funding for expanded learning opportunities. This bill strategically connects partners to work in collaboration in an effort that is critical at this time. We believe that passage of this bill will improve educational disparities by accelerating academic learning, boosting youth engagement, and nurturing the health and well-being of students and their families.

MFS partners with 18,000 people each year, in an effort to help people get past the barriers of poverty, inequity and social isolation. One of our primary objectives is to *help youth succeed*. We have long standing partnerships with six school districts, and work with 20 different schools with youth from preschool age through high school. Our efforts focus in low resourced neighborhoods, where families are living on an average income of \$31,800. Seventy percent of our program participants identify as BIPOC and 35% of our program participants speak a language other than English at home.

We have seen youth in schools benefit greatly both academically and socially from our culturally responsive approach in delivering after school and summer programs. In a recent survey of students, 93% agreed they had adults at their summer program who cared about them; 90.6% agreed they felt safe talking with adults at their summer program; 92.5% agreed their teachers encouraged them to do their best; and 89.1% agreed they had friends at their summer program. We see a growing need to expand summer learning opportunities to help students retain what they learned during the school year, regain knowledge and catch up from lost learning experiences during the pandemic, and build strong social emotional skills and foster a sense of belonging & connection.

In the 2022-2023 School Year, MFS partnered with school districts to serve a total of 648 youth and family members in the summer, 1,937 youth and their family members across 11 schools in Beaverton, Centennial, Gresham Barlow, and Reynolds school districts. HB 4082 would allow for increased intentional alignment of services and partnerships between school districts and community-based organizations, to provide a holistic service approach to address the needs of students and families, resulting in increased academic success, improved social emotional skills, and connection to resources. One parent shared that *"Having the summer school makes a huge difference, because they go with no school for the entire summer and they actually lose a lot of skills. So, having a little bit of activities that are structured right in the middle of summer I felt like made the transition to the next school year so much smoother. And being able to wake up and go somewhere gives them meaning, so personally for my family having [SUN/CAFE] summer school activities was super helpful."*

Now is the time to intervene so students and families of Oregon can thrive. We respectfully urge you to pass HB 4082 in order to lead the way in this very critical moment.

Thank you for your service to Oregon, and for taking the time to hear our concern. Please let me know if you have questions or wish to discuss this issue further. I can be reached at meghanz@mfs.email

Sincerely,



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Moving Lives Forward.

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