



410 NE 18th Ave  
Portland, OR 97232

**LatinoNetwork**

www.latnet.org  
503.283.6881

To: Chair Neron, Vice Chairs, and members of the committee  
Re: Support HB 4082  
Date: 2/5/2024

Latino Network was founded in 1996 by advocates for the needs of the growing Latinx community in Multnomah County. Since then, these grassroots beginnings have evolved into a continuum of services that support Latinx individuals, families, and communities. Our programs currently focus on education, advocacy & leadership, health & wellness, economic justice, youth empowerment & violence prevention, and arts & culture, engaging nearly 11,000 community members throughout Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties in the last year. We are the leading culturally-specific provider for Latinx youth, parent, and family services in the Portland area with the goal of serving the nearly 19% of Oregon's population who identify as Latinx or Hispanic.

Latino Network currently provides direct services to youth and families in Senate Districts 13-15 and 19-25 and House Districts 25, 26, 28, 29, 37, 40 and 42-50.

We support HB 4082, as COVID-era flexible funds for community health and safety interventions expire, and the criminal/legal system backlash against M110 descends across communities in Oregon, now is a critical time to invest in youth development, learning and health supports. Without investments and plans for long-term partnership we are likely to see backslides that perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline, over policing in communities of color, and a widening of educational and health inequities. Further, without state investment and state leadership, summer and afterschool programming will continue to look very different in each community, potentially widening equity gaps.

From 2022 when there was state investment to 2023 when there was no significant state contribution to summer programs, at Latino Network alone that resulted in a 50% reduction in the number of youth who were able to access case management, mentorship, credit recovery and college exploration and readiness.

- Summer and afterschool learning creates opportunities for academic enrichment
  - At Latino Network this means programs and interventions that support positive brain development, assist with credit recovery, transition support from middle to high school and high school to college.
  - Increase a feeling of belonging and safety at schools for both students and parents
- Summer and afterschool learning creates opportunities for youth development
  - At Latino Network this means programs and services that support positive social emotional development, violence prevention for youth, building community through cultural, increasing the number of caring adults in young people's lives
- Summer and afterschool learning creates opportunities to improve equitable access and



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#### engagement

- At Latino Network we are able to work with youth and parents to feel more knowledgeable and comfortable navigating school systems and requesting resources
- Summer programs help to maintain connections with youth and their families to feel safe, informed and ready for the school year

But you don't need to just take our word for it, here are a few comments from youth about their experience with Latino Network after school and summer programs:

"They have helped me a lot, both academically and emotionally. Helping me maintain good grades while also being mindful of my mental health. I am very grateful for the support they have provided throughout this time that I've been in high school. Besides that they provided financial assistance for me and my family during the hard times through the pandemic."

"I really get the help and get pushed to accomplish my goals in life. I get to meet new people and have the support I need. Escalera has helped me with convincing me to go to college by taking me to colleges and showing us the campus to move us forward."

"They help me set and reach personal goals that I don't believe I would have reached on my own."

"I have received so many resources and opportunities that I haven't found anywhere else to go. I've done better academically since I joined Escalera. I've felt like I can do so much. Also I enjoy the community, I feel heard."

"It's a program to help me stay on track and helps me better my future plans."

"Early Escalera helps me with many things, like going to college and they help me financially when I need things like food."

"It is a safe space to ask for academic and emotional support. They have helped me to be academically successful with getting good grades and have checked up on me frequently to see how I am doing personally."

"This program makes me feel seen, and it has helped me the 4 years I've been at Benson High School. It makes me feel like I belong and it makes me happy to have people that look like me and speak like me. Escalera makes me feel like I have a safe place."



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“I feel very safe and more connected with others in my culture. I get advice from peer who were in my position growing up and want to help us as much as possible to grow as students and as people.”

“It gives me a chance to have just the right resources and support to be the most successful and hard-working version of my student self that I can be. I currently feel so lucky to be able to have this opportunity to connect with these people everyday.”

“I enjoy being part of the program because of the chance they provide for me to be an important figure in my community. I don't know where I would be without my coordinator. I feel so happy and motivated as a student to be able to have this resource. It's like family!”

Even nationally, experts can see what is coming without strategic investment and partnership from the state: <https://educationrecoverycorecard.org/states/oregon/>

“No one wants to see poor kids footing the bill for the pandemic, but that is the path Oregon is on,” said Dr. Thomas Kane, Faculty Director of the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University and one of the study's co-authors. “With federal relief dollars drying up, state leaders must ensure the remaining dollars are used for Summer 2024 and for tutoring and after-school next year.”

Please vote YES on HB 4082