



**House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee
HB 2675**

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Dawn Bailey, Associate Professor, Oregon Institute of Technology

Good morning, Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Dawn Bailey, and I'm an associate professor at Oregon Tech, Oregon's Polytechnic University. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of HB 2675.

First, Oregon Tech would like to thank Representative Emily McIntire for introducing House Bill 2675 and her support for Oregon Tech and the Klamath Falls community. This legislation was born out of conversations with Representative McIntire and Oregon Tech over the last year and we are honored that she sees the value in supporting this pilot project.

At Oregon Tech, we are passionate about creating hands-on learning opportunities for our students while addressing the pressing needs of the communities we serve.

In the summer of 2022, the Klamath County Economic Development Association partnered with Oregon Tech's Population Health Management program on a survey to identify childcare needs in Klamath County. After-school and summer care for 5 to 12 year olds represented a significant population of the children in the Klamath area in need of qualified childcare options. For after-school care, transportation to after-school care for working parents was also identified as a significant barrier.

Another reality in our community is that many of our youngest learners have fallen behind academically. During the 2022-2023 school year, only 28.1% of third graders in the Klamath Falls City School District were proficient in reading. This is far below the statewide average of 39.4%. These numbers highlight the urgent need for effective support for children in Klamath Falls.

HB 2675 addresses these challenges by creating the Owls Nest, a two-year pilot program on the Oregon Tech campus. This program will provide after-school care for children ages 5 to 12 in the Klamath Falls community. The Owls Nest will offer intensive tutoring in reading and/or math, social skills development, and

physical activity. It's a holistic approach that helps children grow academically while providing the structure and support they need to thrive.

The Owls Nest is unique in how it benefits both the children in our community and the students at Oregon Tech. By staffing the program with students in our MS-Applied Behavioral Analysis, BS-Psychology, and MS-Athletic Training programs, we're offering Oregon Tech students unparalleled opportunities to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings. These future professionals gain valuable teaching, clinical, and communication skills while making a meaningful difference in their community.

We've seen success when Oregon Tech students work with elementary school students. For the past year and a half, Oregon Tech has contracted with the Klamath Falls City School District to provide individualized reading instruction for some of their lowest-performing students. With this partnership, we have been able to improve their reading scores by an average of 38% after just 40 hours of intensive instruction.

Since the summer of 2023, Oregon Tech has been an affiliate of Fit Learning. As part of our partnership with FIT Learning, we are able to provide evidence-based instruction in reading, math, and logic. Our precision teaching approach draws upon direct instruction and other evidence-based approaches related to instruction in these core areas. Oregon Tech faculty have successfully trained our PSY and ABA students to deliver these services across several schools and sites within Klamath County. Our reading curriculum is based on the Science of Reading curriculum and aligns with Oregon's Early Literacy Success initiatives (HB 3198).

HB 2675 will build on that success, creating lasting benefits for children and families.

HB 2675 requests \$802,835 for start-up costs for the two-year pilot program. If funding is approved, Oregon Tech is prepared to open the Owls Nest in the fall of the 2025-2026 school year with 30 students. The goal is to scale up to 60 students in January of 2026 and ultimately would be able to serve up to 75 students in total.

The funding request includes the purchase of four 15-passenger vans to transport students from school to the Oregon Tech campus, a key component of service. The funding also includes staffing, supplies, insurance and other anticipated costs.

This program is fee-based – meaning that there is a low cost to participants with the goal of the Owls Nest to be self-sustainable after the two-year pilot program. Summer camps would also be offered to help offset costs during the school year.

Oregon Tech has demonstrated success in operating auxiliary programs like this including our dental clinic and Applied Behavioral Analysis clinic serving community members while providing opportunities for Oregon Tech students to work in the field.

With your support of HB 2675, Oregon Tech looks to invest in a program that strengthens families, addresses educational gaps, and equips Oregon Tech students with practical experience that will serve them in their careers.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I urge you to support HB 2675, and I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.