



March 21, 2025

To: Sen. Kate Lieber, Co-Chair, Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair, Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Cc: Senator Janeen Sollman, Co-Chair, Subcommittee On Education
Representative Ricki Ruiz, Co-Chair, Subcommittee On Education
Senator Lew Frederick
Senator Suzanne Weber
Representative Susan McLain
Representative Hoa Nguyen
Representative Boomer Wright
Representative Dwayne Yunker

Re: SB 5515, Oregon Department of Education, Recovery Schools Funding

Dear Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez; Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz; and members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education:

My name is Michael Durchslag and I am currently the Board President of the Associations of Recovery Schools (ARS). I am writing in strong support of funding Oregon Department of Education recovery high schools in the 2025-27 biennium at the full \$12.7 million requested by the agency.

As the only national organization that supports recovery high schools, ARS was incredibly excited when this historic funding through HB 2767 was passed in 2023. We have used your legislation as a model when we talk with other states across the country as well as the federal level. Oregon became a true leader in adolescent recovery support services through HB2767, which includes specific efforts in expanding recovery high schools into rural areas.

Recovery high schools are highly researched, highly effective schools designed specifically for students in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD) and co-occurring disorders. Research shows that students who choose to attend a recovery high school are more than twice as likely to remain sober than their counterparts who return to a non-recovery high school. Research has also shown that students at recovery high schools have higher attendance rates, higher graduation rates, better learning outcomes and better quality of life. Given that substance use disorder rates in youth and young adults in Oregon continue to outpace the national average, it is more important now than ever before that we commit to providing the necessary resources for young Oregonians to be successful.

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Whereas we understand that there are real budget concerns facing states and local areas, the \$12.7 million originally allocated is relatively small compared to the overall education budget. It could mean the difference between life and death for youth with SUD. We **urge your support for these critical services** and ask that you fund ODE's recovery school budget request at its full capacity.

Thank you for considering this letter of support. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information or assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael F Durchslag

Michael F. Durchslag
Board Chair, Association of Recovery Schools