

Submitter: Aaron Randels  
On Behalf Of: Ashton Crawford and Rivercrest Academy  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5515

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 Aaron Randels, I work at Leathers Fuels, and I am writing in strong support of funding ODE's recovery high schools in the 2025-27 biennium, at the full \$12.7 million requested by the agency.

Recovery high schools are highly researched, highly effective schools designed specifically for students with substance use disorder (SUD) and co-occurring disorders, who are actively in recovery. My step son was struggling with depression and anxiety and was addicted to drugs and alcohol for several years just trying to numb the pain. The public middle schools he was attending were good schools but with some really great teachers but with so many students he got lost in all the chaos and continued to gravitate towards making friends with trouble makers and kids that use drugs daily both at school and outside of school. He was getting into fights, running away, and last year when things were at an all time low he took our daughters car in the middle of the night and picked up a handful of friends and ended up rolling the car and totaling it. We got him into an inpatient program after going back and forth with the insurance company and enrolled him in Rivercrest Academy. It has been a game changer having him in a smaller environment with faculty hands on and on alert along with students that value sobriety and want to stay clean. We were at a complete loss and were just waiting for the next call from the police and now he is living a clean and sober life and performing at an extremely high level. None of this would have been possible without Rivercrest Academy and their

incredible staff and all the support for our son and for us that comes with being a part of the Rivercrest Academy Culture. They are turning out students that know they have been given a second lease on life, and its remarkable the level of maturity and perspective they have given what they have been through and overcome.

Appreciate your time and consideration in keeping the budget in tact for not only our child but all the other children and parents that feel hopeless and lost without programs like Rivercrest Academy that intentionally focus on supporting kids with addiction and mental health issues, and making a huge impact before they are out of school and living on the streets.

Sincerely,

Aaron Randels