

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Neron and Members of the House Education Committee:

As the Superintendent of Harrisburg School District 7, I am writing to express my strong support for **HB 3941**, which would direct the Oregon Department of Education to establish and administer a grant program to support the development and expansion of **community schools** across our state.

Community schools offer a research-backed, equity-centered approach to transforming public education. They create the conditions where **all students can thrive** by integrating academics with health and social services, expanding learning opportunities beyond the school day, and building deep partnerships with families and communities.

This model aligns directly with what makes a **great school**: strong relationships, inclusive and engaging instruction, responsive support, and a deep sense of connection and belonging for every student. These are not isolated strategies but part of an **integrated system** that drives student success.

The evidence is compelling. According to the **Learning Policy Institute research**, **community schools improve student attendance, behavior, and academic outcomes**, especially for students furthest from opportunity. The RAND Corporation's evaluation of New York City's Community Schools Initiative found **positive impacts on achievement, graduation rates, and school climate**. These findings affirm what we see in our schools: when we address the needs of the whole child and invite families and communities to lead alongside us, schools become more than places of instruction—they become **hubs of opportunity, equity, and hope**.

HB 3941 represents a critical investment in this vision. It supports not just isolated interventions but a **coherent, community-driven strategy** for school improvement that aligns with Oregon's commitment to educational equity and long-term impact.

Equally important, the community schools approach shifts the **burden of accountability away from students, educators, and families**, and places it squarely on the system to create the conditions for success. It recognizes that when students struggle, the answer is not to blame individuals but to strengthen the structures, supports, and relationships surrounding them.

As superintendents, we are accountable for more than test scores—we are responsible for building schools that engage, support, and prepare every student for a successful future. HB 3941 gives us the tools and resources to partner with our communities.

I urge you to support this critical legislation and help ensure that every child in Oregon has access to a **great school in their neighborhood**—a school built with, and for, the community it serves.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Oregon's students.

Sincerely,

Steve Woods

Superintendent, Harrisburg School District 7

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Neron and Members of the House Education Committee:

As Superintendent of [District Name], I urge your support for **HB 3941**, which directs the Oregon Department of Education to establish a grant program for community schools.

Community schools offer a proven, equity-centered approach to building **great schools**—schools that meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of every student. They strengthen teaching and learning, integrate health and social services, expand learning opportunities, and foster strong family and community partnerships. In short, they create the **conditions where all students can thrive**.

This model is grounded in research. Studies from the **Learning Policy Institute** and **RAND Corporation** show that community schools improve attendance, achievement, school climate, and graduation rates—particularly for historically underserved students.

HB 3491 supports a system where **accountability is shared**, and the responsibility for student success rests not on individuals alone, but on schools and systems to create supportive, inclusive environments. It gives districts like mine the resources to build stronger school–community partnerships and address root causes of inequity.

Our students deserve more than fragmented interventions—they deserve schools built on purpose, connection, and opportunity. HB 3941 moves us toward that vision.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to Oregon’s future.

Sincerely,
[Superintendent Name]
Superintendent, [District Name]

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear [Chair Neron and Members of the House Education Committee:

As Superintendent of [District Name], I write in strong support of **HB 3941**, which would establish a grant program to support the development and expansion of **community schools** across Oregon. This legislation represents a critical step toward creating the kinds of schools our students—and our communities—need and deserve.

Community schools offer more than a programmatic solution; they represent a **comprehensive, research-based strategy** for school transformation. By integrating academics with health and social services, providing expanded learning opportunities, and building deep partnerships with families and communities, community schools create the **conditions that support student success in every aspect of life**.

This model is not theoretical. A growing body of national research confirms its impact. The **Learning Policy Institute** and **RAND Corporation** have documented improvements in academic achievement, attendance, student behavior, graduation rates, and overall school climate. These effects are particularly strong for students in historically underserved communities—students who have too often been left behind by fragmented or compliance-based approaches to school improvement.

What makes the community school model so powerful is that it is **place-based and community-driven**. It invites students, families, educators, and local partners to co-create a school's identity, goals, and strategies. This shared ownership builds trust and strengthens engagement. It also shifts the burden of accountability—**placing it not on individual students or educators, but on the system** to ensure that every child has access to the supports, relationships, and learning experiences they need to thrive.

HB 39941 aligns with our district's efforts to build schools where **belonging, connection, and academic excellence** go hand in hand. It offers the resources and framework to sustain that work, grounded in the lived experiences of our communities and the evidence of what works for kids.

Our students don't need more one-size-fits-all reforms. They need **great schools—right in their neighborhoods—that are built with and for them**. Community schools are a powerful way to deliver on that promise.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to ensuring every Oregon student has the opportunity to succeed.

Sincerely,
[Superintendent Name]
Superintendent, [District Name]