

Submitter: Dave Kline
On Behalf Of: HB 3941
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3941

Oregon State Legislature 900 Court St NE Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Neron and Members of the House Education Committee:

As Superintendent of the Colton School District 53, I am writing to express my unequivocal support for House Bill 3941, which mandates the Oregon Department of Education to establish and administer a grant program for the development and expansion of community schools across the state.

Community schools employ an evidence-based, equity-driven framework to transform public education by addressing the comprehensive needs of students. This model integrates academic instruction with vital health and social services, extends learning opportunities beyond traditional school hours, and cultivates meaningful partnerships with families and community stakeholders.

The community school framework aligns seamlessly with the foundational elements of an effective school system: fostering robust relationships, delivering inclusive and engaging instruction, providing responsive and adaptive support, and nurturing a profound sense of connection and belonging for all students. These elements operate as an interconnected system, driving measurable outcomes for student achievement.

Substantial research validates this approach. Studies conducted by the Learning Policy Institute highlight significant improvements in student attendance, behavior, and academic performance, particularly for those furthest from opportunity. Furthermore, the RAND Corporation's evaluation of New York City's Community Schools Initiative underscores the model's positive impacts on academic achievement, graduation rates, and school climate. These findings corroborate the experiences of Oregon schools: when educational systems address the holistic needs of students and embrace families and communities as collaborative partners, schools evolve into centers of opportunity, equity, and shared success.

House Bill 3941 represents a strategic investment in a proven model for systemic school improvement, supporting not only targeted interventions but also a cohesive, community-led strategy for sustained educational equity and progress. The legislation underscores a critical shift in accountability—from placing undue pressure on students, educators, and families to holding systems responsible for establishing conditions that enable all students to succeed.

As educational leaders, we are responsible for much more than test scores; we must create environments that engage, support, and prepare students for lifelong success. HB 3941 provides the necessary resources and structure to achieve this goal in partnership with the communities we serve.

I respectfully urge your support for HB 3941 to ensure that every child in Oregon has access to a school that reflects the values, needs, and aspirations of the community it serves. This legislation is a pivotal step toward realizing a more equitable and effective public education system for our state.

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

Sincerely, Dave Kline Superintendent Colton School District 53