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March 31, 2025

Representative Courtney Neron, Chair  
House Committee on Education  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of HB 3941 and the development of full-service community schools in Oregon. Community schools are a proven strategy to address barriers to learning, provide additional educational support, and engage the full community to ensure our children's success. They are especially needed with the current landscape in education, social services and homelessness.

Community Schools are a documented strategy nationally and recognized as a place where educators, local community members, families, and students work together to strengthen conditions for student learning and healthy development. They also are an identified school improvement strategy.

In Multnomah County, we have been engaged in full-service community school partnerships for over two decades. Our Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Community School initiative has shown strong results in student engagement, safety and belonging; regular attendance; and family engagement. We have used the community school model as a key way to address chronic absenteeism since the issue was first identified in 2008.

As we see high rates of chronic absenteeism, mental health challenges, and a general lack of engagement in schools post-pandemic, community schools are an effective and important approach for us to be taking. Community schools bring together partners and resources from a wide range of sectors - school, government, nonprofit, parents and community - and provide a comprehensive framework that brings everyone together to ensure that we are collaborating to use our resources in ways that best meet the needs of each unique community.

None of us has the resources or ability to solve the challenges our children are facing today - but together we have that possibility.

Schools are natural community hubs, and full-service community schools allow us to transform them into public community-driven service delivery and community engagement spaces that support and uplift families. As the SUN name suggests, community schools unite the neighborhood.

We at Multnomah County support HB 3941 and ask that you take this critical step to pilot the community school model in Oregon and expand access to this important resource that can support students to succeed and their families to be stable.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohammad Bader', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mohammad Bader, MS,LPC  
Director  
Department of County Human Services