

Dear Chairs Sollman and Ruiz, and Members of the Committee,

I have had the privilege to work as a teacher in Harrisburg, Oregon for the last 17 years. In that time, I've taught grades 3, 4, and 6 in the regular education classroom, and students in grades K-8 working in-person and remotely with an online curriculum. This year was my first opportunity to attend Outdoor School with my 6th grade students, and I was amazed by how much they learned and how much joy they experienced.

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the continued and expanded funding of Outdoor School opportunities for our children in Oregon schools. First, I want to thank the Legislature for recognizing the value of these experiences. In Harrisburg, our students would not have been able to attend a week-long Outdoor School program without the full funding provided by the state. Because of your investment, our students had an unforgettable experience, one that would not have been possible otherwise.

Oregon voters have also shown strong support for Outdoor School. In 2016, voters passed Measure 99, and since then, more than a quarter of a million children have been able to attend Outdoor School! The investment made in our children's education and personal growth is priceless, and its impact will be felt for generations.

Attending Outdoor OSchool with my students was a transformative experience—for them and me. I saw students who sometimes struggle in the classroom rise as leaders and encourage others during archery practice. I saw friendships strengthen and new friendships blossom. I saw all students working together, problem solving, cheering each other on, and physically and emotionally lifting each other up while completing a challenge! Our children were physically challenged with learning new skills, and they succeeded with the help, support, and encouragement of their classmates. Students pushed their abilities while climbing a rock wall over and over again.

As their teacher, I didn't just observe, I got to learn and grow with them! That shared experience brought us closer and made us a stronger team.

I know our students will cherish the memories they made in Outdoor School. I still remember the songs I sang, the hikes I took, and the special activities I participated in when I was a 6th grader at Camp Myrtlewood Outdoor School. Please do not deny our children the opportunity to make life long memories.

Thank you for your time and continued support of Outdoor School.

Sincerely,
Kinsey Jones
6th Grade Social Studies Teacher
K-8 Online Teacher
Harrisburg School District