

Submitter: Tri Sanger
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4112

To whom it may concern,

Outdoor School is a core part of Oregonian identity. Our program was started in 1966, and since then we have served hundreds of thousands of students. Of those thousands of students, my grandma was one of the first. And I am proud to say that I too, was a sixth grader at Outdoor School in 2011.

When I was in sixth grade there were significant budget cuts to education. I remember electives at my school being cut, worries about language programs closing, and most devastatingly I only got to attend Outdoor School for 3 days. It had been something I had been looking forward to nearly my whole life. As the child of a sixth grade teacher and a sixth generation Oregonian, Outdoor School was the big thing for me. And I loved those 3 days dearly, I remember laughing with my friends, singing silly songs, putting loam on my face, and trying jello salad for the first time. But most importantly I got to meet people I never would have met elsewhere, Student Leaders and staff, and also students. Growing up in a predominantly white neighborhood, Outdoor School was the first time I met someone who was Muslim, who looked different than me, wore different clothes and practiced a different religion, but was so much like me. For those 3 days we were fast friends.

I was lucky enough in high school to be a Student Leader 6 times. Measure 99 passed my junior year, and I remember how my heart swelled with joy and pride and most of all: relief. Outdoor School would be fully funded. No student would have to have that disappointment I had in sixth grade again. They would get the full, real experience.

Now, I have been on staff with the MESD's Outdoor School program for 7 years. I have given so much to this program. And this program has given me so much in return. I can wholeheartedly say that every day Outdoor School makes me a better person. It made me a better, more open-minded person in sixth grade. In High School I learned to be true to myself and stand up for what I believe in because of it. And on staff, working through the pandemic, meeting hundreds of wonderful, smart, silly students every week, I have become kinder, more patient, stronger, and grown to be someone I am proud to be. I love teaching my students and seeing their bravery as they hold a Rough Skinned Newt or Bark Beetle. I love mentoring my high schoolers as they grow into adults. I love doing trail maintenance and invasive species clearing with my students and showing them that they too can make a difference. I love giving back to my community and knowing that I am making a

difference in someone's life every day that I come to work.

So now it's up to us to make sure we can continue to make a difference. Outdoor School does so much for our communities. It deserves to be fully funded so we can provide education to all of our students.