

Submitter:

Kai Swanson

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4112

I genuinely believe Outdoor School is one of the most nourishing and beneficial educational endeavors that Oregon students have the opportunity to attend. Not only does it bring access to many beautiful aspects of our natural world that many children may not have access to, but it also allows them to gain vital knowledge about said natural world. I have personally heard countless students and adults who have gone through the program say that Outdoor School has changed their view of the world for the better. I think an aspect of Outdoor School that I find important, is that it genuinely makes learning fun. I've worked and been schooled in many classrooms and the amount of time where that statement is true within the classroom, is fairly slim in comparison with outdoor school. The fact that this may be a student's first encounter with a completely stimulating and fun learning environment, could potentially lead to a few more lifetime learners. That's powerful.

I think students of all kinds need this type of learning experience, if for nothing else, to nourish the soul and spark curiosity about how we as humans fit into this ever so large earth ecosystem.

With funding cuts last fall, as someone who is just a small piece of the wonderful community that helps run this program, I can say without a doubt that students were the ones who struggled most because of those cuts. All of the wonderful impact I have been talking about can only happen to its full extent when we have the funding (and most importantly, time) to run a 6-day program. That's when I find this program can make magic happen. For the betterment of Oregon as a whole, via a more nurturing schooling experience for our students, please pass this bill. I promise you it's worth every effort and compromise. This program matters so much more than you might know.