

Submitter:

Calliope Crane

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4112

I am a proud Outdoor School Nurse writing to request you resume all funding for our program because it will produce the largest return on investment- healthy Oregonians and a healthy Oregon. All of the data shows that Outdoor School produces incredibly positive outcomes. Now, with the recent agreements between the Oregon Department of Education and Oregon State, we are going to have even more data points that show that Outdoor School is a catalyst for people pursuing further education in our state and staying here to continue making a difference. The Association for Camp Health has released a multitude of data points showing the direct correlation of being in nature, surrounded by trusted adults, and experiencing community and positive mental and physical health outcomes.

The nurses see what happens every single week for people who come to Outdoor School: they start out apprehensive and unsure, and leave encouraged, empowered, healthy, and certain of themselves. I have endless stories and notes that reflect the impact their participation had. Kids who “don’t walk on dirt” who get progressively dirtier each time I see them, or people who don’t know how to talk about their feelings learning how to express themselves, people who are so excited to have 3 meals a day and a snack, students who realize they are gifted and interested and can contribute because they can learn easier when they are standing, participants learning how to set a table or sweep a floor then want to do it repeatedly, kids who feel seen/heard/valued and walk a lot taller as they get back on the bus to return to town, people who realize two things can be true- they are missing home AND they are making lifelong memories with people who would have otherwise been strangers. And of course...my favorite...every single person has an opportunity to see themselves as a scientist who contributes to improving the world.

I’m just one nurse and I’ve served over 4000 people through this program in just 6 short seasons. I’ve seen the impact of creating a safe place for Social Emotional Learning to happen first hand. I’m honored to say we have co-created initiatives that have led to longitudinal improvements and positive outcomes. I came to outdoor school after a 20 year career in Public Health/Community Health/Chronic Disease Management. I immediately noticed how this environment is the ultimate research ground for helping people learn how to take care of themselves and speak about their health.

I dare repeat it: Outdoor School is a catalyst for healthier Oregonians and a healthier Oregon.

Isn’t that what we want? All participants learn about themselves, each other, and the places that surround them. People leave in a better condition than when they arrive

and likely make better choices when they return. Outdoor School teaches all participants how to be stewards in their community, their surroundings and of their resources.

Won't you please do the same? Please?