



Oregon Science Teachers Association

4110 SE Hawthorne Blvd, #1025

Portland, OR 97214-5246

971.361.OSTA

www.oregongeience.org

Dear Chair Hudson, Co-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and members of the House Education Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Science Teachers Association (OSTA), a statewide organization dedicated to advancing high-quality science education and fostering a scientifically literate society, we write to urge your continued support for full and proper funding for Outdoor School across Oregon. Please protect “Outdoor School for All” by supporting Rep. Hudson's legislation, [House Bill 4112](#) to restore \$6 million in Outdoor School funding for 2026. Without this critical investment, we risk shifting from “Outdoor School for All” to “Outdoor School for Some” - an unacceptable regression in equitable access to one of Oregon's most impactful educational experiences.

Outdoor School advances equity in science education. Funding for transportation, staffing, and health and safety support ensures that all students, including those from historically underserved communities and those with additional needs, can participate fully in this transformative experience. Without sustained funding, access will depend on local district resources, creating disparities that undermine Oregon's commitment to educational equity.

Science is rooted in observation, curiosity, questioning, and hands-on exploration. Outdoor School provides a rare and powerful setting where students can practice science the way scientists do: by investigating real systems, asking questions about the world around them, and discovering answers through direct experience. In an era when classroom time is increasingly dedicated to reading, writing, and mathematics, opportunities for experiential science learning are often limited.

Outdoor School is, for many Oregon students, their first meaningful opportunity to connect with the beauty, complexity, and wonder of the natural world. For some children, it is their first time standing in a forest, observing a river ecosystem, or looking up at a dark night sky away from city lights. These experiences are not supplemental to science learning, they are foundational to it. These experiences foster not only environmental literacy, but also a lifelong sense of stewardship and care for Oregon's natural resources. Students leave Outdoor School with a deeper appreciation for the rivers, forests, grasslands, mountains, and coastal regions that define our state, and a stronger understanding of their role in protecting them.

Outdoor School also supports students' mental health and social development by giving them space to explore, collaborate, play, and connect with one another in meaningful ways. In a time of increasing screen time and academic pressure, students need opportunities to breathe, move, wonder, and rediscover the joy of learning.

Outdoor School works. It works for students, for educators, for families, and for Oregon's future.



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We respectfully ask you to ensure that Outdoor School remains a promise fulfilled for every Oregon student, not just those whose districts can afford to make it happen. Please protect “Outdoor School for All” by supporting Rep. Hudson's legislation, [House Bill 4112](#) to restore \$6 million in Outdoor School funding for 2026

With appreciation,

Executive Board
Oregon Science Teachers Association (OSTA)

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