



**Eugene School District 4J**  
200 North Monroe Street  
Eugene, OR 97402-4295  
541-790-7700  
[www.4j.lane.edu](http://www.4j.lane.edu)

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

We are writing to urge your continued support for full and proper funding for Outdoor School across Oregon. 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 cherished educational experiences.

Outdoor School provides all students with the opportunity to learn in nature’s classroom—offering hands-on, experiential learning rooted in Oregon’s rivers, forests, grasslands, mountains and coastal regions where learning becomes truly alive. Students who participate grow up with a deeper appreciation for and connection to Oregon’s natural beauty and resources. This connection fosters lifelong stewardship and care for the environment that sustains us all.

The benefits extend well beyond environmental literacy. Outdoor School supports students’ mental health by giving them space to breathe, explore, play, and connect with one another—something they need more than ever in the wake of the pandemic. The program offers children a break from screens and academic pressures and invites them to develop resilience, curiosity, and joy in learning.

In Eugene School District 4J, Outdoor School funding supports 22 elementary schools and thousands of students each year. It fuels multi-generational learning and mentorship by engaging high school students as leaders. It strengthens core academics—math, literacy, and science—by making learning active and meaningful. Critically, funding supports transportation and staffing, including Education Assistants, nurses, and health and safety staff, who ensure our most vulnerable students are fully supported and included in this powerful learning experience.

Outdoor School works. It works for children. It works for families. And it works for Oregon.

Please ensure that Outdoor School remains a promise fulfilled for every Oregon student—not just those whose districts can afford to make it happen. Protect Outdoor



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School for All with proper and sustained funding. Please restore the additional \$6 million of funding to the program in the end of session budget bill.

Respectfully,

Sarah Ruggiero Kirby,  
Secondary Science Specialist and Outgoing Outdoor School Coordinator

Maggie Frassetto-Cline,  
K-5 Science Specialist and Incoming Outdoor School Coordinator

Erin Gaston  
Elementary Curriculum Administrator and Outdoor School Administrator