



197 W 31st Ave
Eugene, OR 97405
www.oregonclimateed.org

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

On behalf of Oregon Educators for Climate Education (OECE), we write to urge your continued support for full and proper funding for Outdoor School across Oregon.

Without this essential investment, we risk shifting from “Outdoor School for All” to “Outdoor School for Some”, an unacceptable step backward in equitable access to one of Oregon’s most powerful educational experiences.

For many elementary students, Outdoor School is where climate education first becomes real. It is where students step outside and begin to notice patterns in weather, water, plants, animals, soil, and seasonal change. It is where they practice the foundational skill of all science and climate learning: careful observation of the natural world. In early grades, climate education does not begin with charts or data sets, it begins with noticing, wondering, and asking questions in nature. Outdoor School provides the setting where this kind of learning can thrive.

Outdoor School uniquely weaves together multiple Oregon standards and priorities in ways that are difficult to replicate in a traditional classroom. One trip to outdoor school satisfies many of the Climate Education learning standards in Science, Health and Social Studies. Students simultaneously engage with:

- **Science**, through hands-on investigation of ecosystems, water systems, weather, and living organisms;
- **Health and Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (TSEL)**, by building resilience, collaboration, self-awareness, and a sense of belonging through shared outdoor experiences;
- **Social Studies and Geography**, by learning how people interact with land, water, and natural resources, and how place shapes community and culture.

Importantly, Outdoor School also provides a natural and meaningful setting to support Oregon’s **Tribal History/Shared History** requirements. Learning outdoors creates opportunities to center Indigenous ways of knowing, long-standing relationships with the land, and traditional ecological knowledge. Students can begin to understand that land is not simply a backdrop for learning, but a living system with cultural, historical, and ecological significance.

These connections are not theoretical. They are experiential, memorable, and deeply impactful. Outdoor School allows educators to braid together science, climate literacy, social



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studies, health, and Indigenous perspectives into a cohesive learning experience grounded in place.

The benefits extend beyond academics. Outdoor School supports students' mental health and well-being by offering space to move, breathe, explore, and connect with peers and adults in meaningful ways. At a time when students face increasing screen time, academic pressure, and climate anxiety, time spent learning in nature helps restore a sense of curiosity, agency, and hope.

Outdoor School also ensures equity in access to nature-based and climate-connected learning. Funding for transportation, staffing, and student supports ensures that all students, regardless of background or district resources, can participate fully in this transformative experience.

Outdoor School works for students, for educators, for communities, and for Oregon's climate-ready future.

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

Respectfully,

Oregon Educators for Climate Education (OECE)

OECE is a statewide group of educators working toward K-12 climate education integration for Oregon students across all the core subject areas.