

Submitter: Carrie Caselton Lowe  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4112

Dear House Committee on Education,

As an outdoor educator for 23 years and an Outdoor School contractor in Northeast Oregon for the Grande Ronde Community Science Project, I have seen time and again examples of youth benefiting from learning outside. At Outdoor School, youth experience different ways of learning—outside, with discoveries and lessons waiting behind every bush and under every leaf—supporting their academic learning and their overall well-being through physical activity, fresh air, and sunlight. Learning outside inspires youth who do not always feel inspired inside a classroom, creating a sense of belonging unique to the outdoors.

From my perspective in Northeast Oregon, over the last few years, our local Outdoor Schools have hit a stride and moved to a place of deeper youth learning, teacher collaboration, and overall community connection. Funding cuts would disrupt this momentum and set back the rhythms and processes in place. The recent 20% funding cut is already forcing our local Outdoor School partners to shorten programs and limit opportunities. I know of one example where funds are no longer available to include a local Cove farm and North Powder composting business in Outdoor School programming, as has been the routine for the last couple of years. The proposed additional \$1.7 million cut for the upcoming session would be devastating for our Outdoor school students and create negative impacts to economic opportunities for local businesses. I am asking you to support Rep. Hudson's bill to restore \$6 million to the program.

Despite being surrounded by public lands in Northeast Oregon, Outdoor School is many students' first time experiencing Oregon's incredible landscape in a school setting and the gifts of learning outside. Please support this bill and help continue sharing the gifts of Outdoor School with our students.

Thank you for your time and for supporting our students.

Best regards,  
Carrie Caselton Lowe  
RedTwig Education, LLC  
Coordinator for the Grande Ronde Community Science Project