

Dear Legislator,

I am writing to urge you to reject further cuts to Outdoor School and support HB 4112 to restore \$6 million in funding.

Outdoor School is not just enrichment or a “nice to have” benefit. It is essential education that delivers outcomes Oregon students need, particularly at a time when our K-12 system is under immense strain.

Why Outdoor School Matters to Me:

- Children NEED to be outside – learning in nature, learning about nature, getting their hands dirty and their minds open to new experiences outside of the 4 classroom walls.
- My children are not old enough quite yet for outdoor school, but it was transformative for me as a child and even as a teenager when I went back several times as an outdoor school counselor.
- Not all children have access to camping or nature experiences. All children deserve to have these experiences, regardless of demographics or income.

Outdoor School:

- Builds science literacy through hands-on, standards-aligned learning
- Strengthens social-emotional competence, confidence, and belonging
- Improves learning behaviors, especially for students who struggle in traditional classroom settings
- Provides immersive, high-impact learning experiences that prepare students to thrive in ways that are difficult or impossible to replicate indoors
- Lays critical groundwork for post-secondary readiness, and introduces students to career pathways

In 2016, Oregonians made a clear decision when 67% of voters approved Measure 99, establishing Outdoor School as a statewide educational commitment funded through the State School Fund. Oregon has since become a national leader in outdoor education, a distinction that reflects both voter intent and bipartisan legislative support.

Last year, Outdoor School funding was cut by 20%. Programs across the state are still absorbing those losses. Additional proposed cuts of 2.5–5% would further undermine

access, equity, and program quality, particularly for students and schools that rely on Outdoor School the most.

The Legislature has the opportunity to **uphold** the will of Oregon voters by holding Outdoor School harmless from further cuts and restoring \$6 million.

I urge you to support HB 4112 and ensure Outdoor School remains a core component of public education in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Christen Skolnick, LCSW, OSW-c

Involved parent and community member

Family School Elementary

Eugene Oregon