



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

501 North Dixon Street | Portland, OR 97227
(503) 916-2000 | pps.net

February 11th, 2026

Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs McIntire and Dobson, and members of the House Committee on Education,

The Board of Directors of Portland Public Schools urges your support for HB 4112. All members of our school board agree: Outdoor School is a vital part of the student experience for Portland kids and Oregon kids, a rich tradition that is part of what makes Oregon Oregon.

Outdoor School offers students the chance to learn in—and from—one of our state's most valuable resources: our environment. For some kids, Outdoor School is their first meaningful outdoor learning experience. For all kids, it's a chance to better understand Oregon's natural legacy – an understanding that they carry with them into adulthood. Outdoor School provides lessons students simply cannot get in a classroom: building independence and confidence, learning teamwork and leadership, and developing a deeper understanding of science, ecology, and stewardship.

Last session, the Legislature reduced Outdoor School funding by 20 percent, and as a result, students' long-cherished trips were cut short this year, despite decades of Portland kids having a week-long experience. Portland Public Schools is currently facing a \$50 million budget deficit, after \$48 million in cuts last year and \$28 million the year prior. We do not have the capacity to backfill these cuts locally, nor do the many school districts across the state facing cuts this year.

Ballot Measure 99 was designed to ensure against Outdoor School being on the cutting block by creating a dedicated fund with a dedicated funding source. 67% of Oregonians felt that this was an important program to protect and fund every year, across the state, regardless of budget ebbs and flows. We appreciate the strong, bipartisan support for HB 4112 and urge the Legislature to pass this bill to secure funding for Outdoor School for the 2026–27 biennium, honor the spirit and letter of Ballot Measure 99, and ensure that students across Oregon continue to have full access to this transformative educational experience.

Respectfully,

Eddie Wang, Chair
Michelle De Pass, Vice Chair
Rashelle Chase-Miller, Director
Stephanie Engelsman, Director

Virginia La Forte, Director
Christy Splitt, Director
Pattie Sullivan, Director
Student Representative, Ian Ritorto

PPS Board of Education

Zone 1

Christy Splitt

Zone 2

Michelle DePass (Vice-Chair)

Zone 3

Pattie Sullivan

Zone 4

Rashelle Chase-Miller

Zone 5

Virginia La Forte

Zone 6

Stephanie Engelsman

Zone 7

Edward (Eddie) Wang (Chair)

Student Representative

Ian Ritorto



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