

February 10, 2026

Chair Hudson and members of the House Education Committee,

Northwest Regional Education Service District supports HB 4112.

Northwest Regional ESD is the largest of Oregon's 19 education service districts. We serve students, educators, childcare providers and families living in Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and Washington counties with the goal of improving student learning by providing equitable access to high-quality services and support. We operate Northwest Outdoor Science School (NOSS), the largest outdoor school provider in the state, serving about 10,000 students in seven counties every year.

Outdoor school is an extension of the classroom – it provides students the opportunity to learn in the great outdoors for four days and three nights. Through NOSS, students immerse themselves in hands-on, engaging lessons with their peers, our educators, student leaders and educators from their schools at one of our five beautiful sites. Our goal is students will have a memorable experience learning foundational science, want to return to outdoor school as a Student Leader, or choose other outdoor fields as a possible career path.

HB 4112 restores \$6 million in Outdoor School funding. Last year, the Oregon Legislature cut the Outdoor School budget by 20%. We weathered the worst of this storm by using **one-time** reserve funding and making modest reductions to programming for this year. We do not have reserves for next school year. HB 4112 is not a full restoration of funding. It is only half of what was cut in 2025, which means our program will still need to make reductions. This correction saves us from gutting student programming. Without HB 4112, the class of 2033 will have a drastically different experience, with far less hands-on scientific inquiry and nature-based learning than their older peers.

The voter approved funding from Measure 99, dedicating 4% of lottery revenues to outdoor school allowed programs to go from a system that was out of compliance with safety standards into one that is professionally staffed, safer for students, and more equitable for families. After the passage of Measure 99, NOSS was able to provide necessary staffing expansion to meet ACA ratios, health insurance access to employees, and implement new supports like translation and family outreach that ensure every child can participate.

We urge the legislature to pass HB 4112 now and fund the outdoor school to the levels set forth by Measure 99 going forward so the progress on allowing as many children to participate in outdoor school continues!

Respectfully,

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