

I am writing in Support for HB 4112; Increasing the biennial lottery allocation made for the outdoor school program and I'd like to add a perspective that I didn't hear much at the Hearing of HB 4112 in Salem on February 11th, 2026.

My Outdoor School name is Magpie, but I am just one of a great many Oregonians who have taken on a species name and a distinct role during our outdoor school (ODS) experiences. I'm sure you have been sent many personal accounts of how ODS has made a permanent positive impact on Oregonians' lives. And yes, any distinct, punctuated event in a young person's life will be impactful. The countless positive quotes from ODS students speak of connection, self-confidence, growth, relevant learning, life changes, skill building, etc. ODS programs that incorporate high school students as leaders and teachers have also recorded positively impactful responses from these students, as well as from their success after their ODS experience. I have been a **student** at Oregon outdoor schools, an **educator** at an Oregon outdoor school, a **coordinator** in an Oregon outdoor school, and a coordinator of an Oregon **online school**'s outdoor school program. From my experiences within Outdoor Schools, I can only add to the incredible inspiration ODS has had on my life. As an Oregon teacher for the last 16 years, I would like to tell you how the ODS experience is an essential component of our responsibility in educating our Oregon students for their future and the future of our state.

The state of our world, our country and our state have very different projected futures now, then it did 30 years ago. As an educator I wish I could say that I have seen an improvement in the lives of our students, however our youth are dealing with multiple crises today that were not as prevalent as even a decade ago. The percentage of students in virtual and online learning environments has increased steadily over the past decade, more recently because students no longer feel safe in in-person schools. Essential and technical jobs are losing skilled workers and struggling to find replacements as many students lack the career skills to join the workforce after high school. Mental health issues in our students are increasing from the use of social media and the exposure to a bleak future because of Climate Change. Outdoor school can help all of these things. Students who [attend ODS report](#); increased positive mental health outcomes, increased motivation and achievement in school, higher attendance and success in Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes, and higher high school graduation rates. I currently work for one of Oregon's largest k-12+ online schools, and I would like to add that **the need for online students to experience ODS is as great or greater than in person schools**, as they have far fewer opportunities to have social connection and develop ODS skills during their online school experience.

The Oregon Outdoor School experience provides a number of benefits to our students, and I would like to highlight a few as they are distinct from what is provided in most all of Oregon's typical in person and online schools.

- Spending extended time outdoors, and off of technological devices, reduces feelings of anxiety and depression.
- Students are exposed to opportunities to learn and practice 21st century skills like; Critical thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Flexibility, Leadership, Initiative, Productivity, and Social skills.
- When high school students are involved in leading and/or teaching, they are learning and practicing employability skills like; Adaptability, Collaboration, Analysis/Solution Mindset, Communication, Empathy, Resilience, Social Awareness, and Social/Diversity Awareness. These skills are sought after in both college applications as well as from employers.

Not many schools can provide experiences that build the majority of these skills and as funding in our schools shrinks, we are left with less opportunities for hands-on, experiential, relevant, applicable, skills-based experiences. Outdoor school programs naturally build these skills and are an essential part of Oregon students' education and their future.

Most outdoor school programs last for a few days to a week, and yet **these experiences have lasted a lifetime as our youth have grown into our teachers, workers, and leaders**. Oregon is as intricately connected by a network of

people deeply impacted by their outdoor school experience as the mycelium network that connects our ecosystems in this state and the Pacific Northwest. This region is known for our forests, mountains, outdoor recreation, and conservation. Tourists pour into Oregon to see and experience our incredible biodiversity. **The Oregon Outdoor School experience has a history that has formed our social network of Oregon citizens who have created and supported what we have to offer today.** Our students need the connection, support, and skills that Oregon's Outdoor School experiences uniquely provide and Oregon's future needs our students to have these experiences. Please support HB 4112 to continue to support our Oregon legacy and our Oregon future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Megan "Magpie" Alameda

Baker Charter Schools

Much appreciation for the sponsors of this bill; Representative Hudson, Senator Weber, Representative McIntire, Dobson, Owens, Wright, Senator Frederick, Neron Misslin, Representative Andersen, Bunch, Chotzen, Diehl, Edwards, Elmer, Gamba, Gomberg, Grayber, Harbick, Helfrich, Helm, Isadore, Levy B, Levy E, Lively, Mannix, McDonald, Munoz, Nguyen D, Nosse, Osborne, Pham H, Reschke, Rieke Smith, Smith G, Sosa, Walters, Watanabe, Wise, Senator Anderson, Broadman, Drazan, Gorsek, Manning Jr, McLane, Meek, Nash, Pham, Smith DB, Starr, Taylor,