



Kristin Kovalik, Oregon Director
15 SW Colorado Ave., Suite 100
Bend, OR 97702

Dear Oregon Legislators

I am writing to express strong support for the Riddle Elementary Schoolyard project the Riddle School District's request for a capital investment of \$550,000 from the State.

For the past four years Trust for Public Land (TPL) has partnered with the elementary school and district on the schoolyard project. From overseeing community and student engagement, hiring the landscape architect to design the new schoolyard and raising funds to build the project, TPL is committed to seeing this project through completion.

An investment from the State would be matched with over \$650,000 of private and federal funding and would allow the schoolyard construction project to be completed by early 2027. The project is an investment in health, safety, education and an opportunity to hire local businesses and help strengthen a rural community.

Studies have shown close to home opportunities for active recreation, places to relax in nature and places for multi-generational community members to gather strengthens social relationships and contributes positively to mental and physical health outcomes.

In the study *The importance of outdoor play for young children's healthy development* found that play promotes cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being, offering the necessary conditions for children to thrive and learn. Through play, the child can experiment, solve problems, think creatively, cooperate with others, etc., gaining a deeper knowledge about his/herself and the world.

While there are many competing and important needs around the state I urge you to consider this modest funding request that will have a tremendous long term impact for the entire Riddle community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristin", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Kristin Kovalik, Trust for Public Land