

Testimony to Transportation and Economic Development Committee
March 11, 2015; 3:00 pm
HB 2639

Thank you, Representative McKeown
And thank you, Committee Members

My name is Susan Hamann. I am the Quality Improvement Coordinator for Oregon Afterschool for Kids, the statewide afterschool network. I work to support afterschool programs all over Oregon. I am here to speak in support of HB 2639.

More than a decade of research confirms that quality afterschool programs inspire and motivate children to learn, reduce the number of school absences, support children's social emotional growth, and help raise their academic achievement. In Oregon 131,779 of school-age children are alone and unsupervised during the hours afterschool. That's 22% of school age kids!

In 2010 – 2011 OregonASK identified 806 afterschool programs, and 673 of them are on school campuses. These programs operate at least 3 days a week, or 12 hours or more. Due to program capacity limitations only about 91,595 students in Oregon, which is less than 16% of the student population, are participating in afterschool programs. For the rest, 221,708 (44%) out-of-school time hours present challenges to families and communities as well as compromise youth who are already vulnerable.

Cities and municipalities acknowledge that these same unsupervised hours could be spent in quality afterschool or summer programs that would dramatically expand learning opportunities.

We hope that you recognize that organized and intentionally designed non-school hour programs cannot only help keep communities safe, but that they keep kids engaged in learning which supports collaboration, problem solving, creative thinking, and helps develop life skills and enrichment opportunities that they would otherwise not be able to access.

But, the benefits of these highly impactful programs are lost when kids can't get to them or can't participate because they don't have a way to get home from them.

In the 2011 Supporting Student Success report superintendents, principals, families and providers identified **transportation** as a major barrier in supporting students in afterschool programs - and it was described as almost nonexistent for children in suburban and rural areas and children in special education.

HB 2639 can address the problem of access to Expanded Learning Opportunities. Please support HB 2639

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan Hamann
Oregon Afterschool for Kids
503-689-1656
susan.hamann@oregonask.org