



Representative Peter Buckley  
Senator Richard Devlin

Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee  
On Way and Means  
RE: Open School

Co-Chairs Devlin and Buckley:

We have joined together to request funding for Open School, a new campus for Open Meadow Alternative Schools that will be a transformational investment in our communities. This innovative partnership with six school districts (Gresham-Barlow, Centennial, David Douglas, Parkrose, Portland Public Schools and Reynolds) and the University of Portland's School of Education is reinventing how we educate and prepare youth impacted by racism and poverty for college and the modern workforce.

Students at Open School have a 75 percent probability of dropping out of traditional school. Using early-warning indicators and robust supports at key transition points, Open School aims to have a 100 percent graduation rate. Furthermore, Open School will strive for a 100 percent college (two- or four-year) going population. Located in East Multnomah County's Rockwood neighborhood, Open School enrolled its first class of 7th graders in August 2014. Open School will have an annual enrollment of approximately 270 students in grades 7 through 12 by 2019. The demographics include a student poverty rate of 86 percent; 67 percent are students of color.

The Open School campus is a unique partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs of Portland Metropolitan Area at a site located on SE Stark and SE 165th Avenue. The Boys and Girls Club and Open School will share a cafeteria, kitchen, gymnasium and classroom space, utilizing the space at different times. This is not only an efficient use of resources, it allows high-risk students an easy transition to safe after-school programming.

New Market Tax Credits will be sought for this project by the partnership. Qualifying for this opportunity will require that Open Meadow and Boys and Girls Clubs provide approximately 75 percent of the project cost by the summer of 2015. Total project cost for Open School is \$10M. Open School has secured \$5M, and is confident it can raise \$500,000 privately by the summer. We are asking the Legislature to fill the gap with \$2M in capital funding. Doing so will allow this project to benefit from \$1.5M in revenue from the New Market program and provide a tremendous show of confidence to the Rockwood neighborhood.

Please join us in supporting \$2M for Open School.

Respectfully yours,

Representative Carla C. Piluso

Representative Jessica Vega Pederson



Representative Shemia Fagan



Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer



Representative Ann Lininger



Representative Rob Nosse



Representative Chris Gorsek



Representative Barbara Smith Warner



Representative Lew Frederick



Representative Jeff Reardon



Senator Rod Monroe



Senator Chuck Thomsen



Senator Chip Shields



Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson



Senator Michael Dembrow



Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward MD