



confluence

Reflect. Discover. Connect.

SB13 Hearing

February 9, 2017

Thank you Chair Roblen and members of the committee.

Hello my name is Erika Rench. As the Education Coordinator for Confluence, my program connects Native Educators with K-12 classrooms to do meaningful and culturally relevant projects about the Columbia River System from the Native American perspective.

Our program has three outcomes, which are intrinsic to the Indigenous perspective: ecological lifeways, culture and sovereignty. Confluence In the Classroom brings the support. Teachers bring the curriculum. And our Native Educators bring deeper meaning through direct experience with students. This is essential because we recognize that it is not our story to tell.

I'd like to read some words from teachers, students and Native Educators.

An art teacher from rural Washington writes- Standing on the ridge overlooking the Columbia, watching it flow and hearing stories of the fish, beaver and coyote makes it easier to understand the importance of the river for food, transportation and the huge part it plays in the lives of Native Americans. - Laurie Sherburne, Trout Lake School

An after- school coordinator writes -Towards the end of Confluence, South Wasco School had their yearly Pow Wow. The Confluence students were the very first kids dancing, and leading the others in the different types of dance. They absolutely celebrated and embraced the cultural differences within our community and were eager to share it with others. - Amber Anderson, South Wasco School

A fourth grader writes- As soon as Mr. Foster blew into this flute, the entire class fell silent. He mesmerized us. He sang a tribal song, beat his drum and truly expressed himself. If everyone on Earth could hear that, I feel the world would be a much better place.- Sylvia- May Street Elementary

And a Native Educator says - programs like Confluence help "break down barriers and statistics and give native students ownership and pride in school to know their way of life is being taught and respected.- Foster Kalama, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs

We support Senate Bill 13. Thank you for letting me speak today in support of SB13. Thank you for demonstrating your commitment to educating all Oregonians about the Native American experience by passing this bill.

Erika Rench

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