

**Dave Porter
1113 SE Cora Street
Portland, OR 97202**

3/7/19

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLane and members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

Testimony on HB 5016: the State School Fund.

Every Oregon high school student should have the opportunity to spend a high school year studying abroad paid for by the State of Oregon (or one of its local school districts) as a part of their public education programs. High school study abroad should not just be for the wealthy who can afford it.

Please ensure that State School Funds can be used by local school districts to pay for sending high school students to study abroad and that some state school funds are allocated to the Department of Education for a “Strategic Study Abroad Program” which the Department of Education can use to send high school students to study aboard in countries critical for Oregon’s future like China.

Oregon could both improve student learning and save money by paying the fees for high school years abroad provided by existing study abroad organizations. Extending study abroad opportunities to all Oregon students does not require more revenues or more spending, just a shift in what the educational system spends money on. Instead of spending money for students located in high schools in Oregon, we could spend some money on our students in high schools abroad.

In 2016-17, Oregon public education spent \$12,520 per students, including \$11,127 in operating expenditures and \$1,363 in capital expenditures per student.

Seven Largest School Districts in Oregon Report #51, Oregon Department of Education Actual Operating vs Capital Expenditures per Student 2016-17				
School Distict	Student Enrollment	Operating Expenditures per Student	Capital Expenditures per Student	Total Expenditures per Student
Statewide	573,872	\$11,157	\$1,363	\$12,520
Portland	47,240	\$13,678	\$3,269	\$16,947
Salem-Keizer	41,718	\$11,332	\$257	\$11,589
Beaverton	40,800	\$11,050	\$5,085	\$16,135
Hillsboro	20,686	\$11,227	\$26	\$11,253
Bend-LaPine	17,699	\$10,064	\$706	\$10,770
North Clackamas	17,309	\$10,473	\$530	\$11,003
Eugene	17,258	\$10,734	\$3,368	\$14,102

There are current study abroad organizations that offer high school years abroad for less than current per student per year expenditures in Oregon. ASSE, as one of these study abroad organizations, tends to have the lowest fees.

ASSE was established in 1976 as the American Scandinavian Student Exchange by the Swedish Government to organize student exchange programs between Sweden and the United States. It now maintains 38 offices in 31 countries and accommodates more than 30,000 high school age students and host families annually in its programs in the participating countries.

Program fees include: Round trip international airfare from New York to Europe and South Africa, from Miami to Brazil and Argentina, from Los Angeles to Asia/Pacific. Fees also include comprehensive health, accidental death and travel insurance, host family recruitment and screening, non-English speaking country language training, and orientation. Note that for 2019-20 ASSE offers high school years abroad for less than \$12,250 to twenty countries, as follows:

ASSE School Year Abroad Program Fees for 2019/200			
Thailand	\$8,000	Slovakia	\$8,750
Belgium	\$8,750	Spain	\$8,750
Czech Republic	\$8,750	Sweden	\$8,750
Estonia	\$8,750	Switzerland	\$8,750
Germany	\$8,750	Turkey	\$8,750
Italy	\$8,750	China	\$10,250
Moldova	\$8,750	Taiwan	\$10,250
Netherlands	\$8,750	Mongolia	\$10,250
Poland	\$8,750	Vietnam	\$10,250
Portugal	\$8,750	Australia	\$10,450
Romania	\$8,750	Korea	\$12,250

ASSE’s fees for three countries do not include airfare:

French Canada	\$12,300	English Canada	\$10,150
Mexico	\$7,440		

From ASSE:

Becoming an exchange student gives you more than knowledge about another country and its language and culture. A year abroad teaches you about building friendships, taking responsibility for yourself, respecting differences and tolerating the beliefs of others.

Exchange students develop leadership skills, self-confidence and a greater understanding of the complexities of the world around them. This is why the best universities, as well as corporations and professionals, look favourably on students who have spent a school year abroad. They know that former international exchange students bring a higher level of maturity and a global frame of reference to their university studies and activities.

From ASSE on China:

By choosing to spend an ASSE exchange year in China, you are stepping into a new world. The language is totally different and the writing an art in itself. Say goodbye to knives and forks, as chopsticks become your means to sampling new and tasty Chinese dishes served in small bowls. Discover that even the daily chore of grocery shopping becomes an amazing adventure when small market stalls jam-packed with interesting wares replace large supermarkets, and where handlers haggle for the best prices. Attend a Chinese high school, and learn the importance of education in a country where only those who graduate have what it takes to compete in the expanding economy. Most importantly, experience life amongst a people who nurture close family relations, loyalty and a dependency on one another, mostly unknown in the western world.

We need many more Oregon high school students to spend a high school year abroad. It would cost no more than Oregon now spends, just shift what we pay for. It is up to you.

Thank you – Dave Porter

China's Belt and Road Initiative

