

Honorable Delegates,

My name is Jamie Wright and I am currently, Rogue River Elementary School Principal and the Co-project lead for the Rogue River Wellness Center Project. I did not get a chance to speak today during the budget committee meeting, but I thank you in advance for taking the time to read my testimony.

I will begin with my why. When my parents got divorced, we moved to a small logging and farming town, along a beautiful river just outside the I-5 corridor. I was a kid in the elementary school office with an abscessed tooth due to lack of dental care; the kid with marginal to nefarious caregivers so my mom could make ends meet and the kid with a loving parent struggling with addiction and doing the best she could with what she had. **In most of the research, the factors I faced as a child would predict a future that counted me as some negative statistic. But, my community, my school nurse, my teachers, my coaches, and my counselor saved me. Shout out to Scappoose, Oregon, and Senator Betsey Johnson!**

Now, Rogue River's Why: Fast forward 31 years, two degrees and a few licenses later, I fell in love with a small logging and farming town along a beautiful river just outside the I-5 corridor--this time in District 4. Shout Out to Representative Duane Stark! In 2017, my second year as principal, in the second month of school, two students died---a tragic accident and a tragic suicide. The events shook the community, but it was apparent that those deaths tore off scabs of individual trauma in many of our students who had faced generational poverty, abuse, and neglect. After the great recession of 2008 and closing of a local mills and timber operations in the early 90's the community has struggled with economic gain and development.

Amidst the tragedy, came hope and planning. The Rogue River Community gathered and rallied. Parents and local leaders of churches, businesses, public offices and schools gathered to look at the greatest "holes" in the support "net" surrounding our kids. The facts were clear:

- Rogue River is designated a Medically Underserved area. We need local solutions for medical, dental, and mental health needs, especially when we are supporting our children.
- Rogue River School district is the only school district in Jackson County without a school-based health center.
- There is only one certified infant care facility in RR and the Wimer Area. It has zero vacancies. During the pandemic only one preschool remained open. Many of our community's children enter kindergarten with little to no preschool experiences.

The parent advisory council gathered partners, created a design and proposed **a project for an infant/toddler learning center to increase the chances of K-12 success and a health center that would offer dental, medical and mental health providers.** Representative Stark said it best, “We have the location. We have the land. We have the partnerships in place to make this a success. We just need the funds for the building.” It is our hope that you will set aside three million dollars from the Capital Project Fund to fund this project.

I told you my why and my story because **students who make it out of the cycle of trauma make positive change in the communities, they decide to reside in.** The Rogue River Wellness Center project tightens the net, seals the cracks and “saves” more of our children because it removes the barriers to success.

I look forward to hearing you have chosen to fund our project and help our school motto become a reality--Riverhawks Better Themselves, so that the Riverhawks can Better Our World.