



A BRIEFING DOCUMENT for Chairperson Neron and Education Committee members.

OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE CHILDHOOD BRAIN DEVELOPMENT EPIDEMIC HERE IN OREGON.

WHO AND WHERE: We are the **Cascade Head Biosphere Collaborative**, working within Oregon's only UNESCO designated site just north of Lincoln City. We are laser-focused focused on K-8 in-classroom and field based outdoor education, climate research and action, as well as a wide range of arts and sciences based community events. We are a 501(c)(3) corporation and our engine is driven by community based volunteers, state and federal agencies, institutions of higher learning, tribes and other NGO's.

WHAT: We are approaching **Representative Gomberg and the members of the Education Committee regarding an opportunity to address the childhood brain development epidemic identified by Surgeon General Murthy and others.** We believe our successful combination of NGSS standards aligned, in-classroom educational video series, and corresponding in-the-field outdoor experiences, is an effective and proven antidote for this epidemic.

Please take a moment to check out examples of our in-classroom video series:

(This has also been provided in electronic form to the committee)

- [“Rain Drop To Sea” Field Experience overview](#)
- [“Secret Life of Salmon” Field Experience overview](#)
- [“Rain Drop to Sea” 9-part video series on You Tube](#)
- [“Secret Life of Salmon” 5-part video series on You Tube](#)

WHO AND HOW: In a partnership with **NOAA, Oregon Coast Aquarium and the Lincoln County School District** we have been very active over the past three years, providing critically lacking “whole-child” K-8 education, getting kids outside into the living classrooms along Oregon's iconic coastline. These NGSS compliant videos and field curriculum are now being used by 36 other states, and we have been featured nationally by NOAA as a program of excellence. Additionally we have recently expanded the reach of this program for 2023 and 2024, by partnering with school superintendents and principals in the Tillamook and Nestucca School Districts, reaching over half the students on the Oregon Coast. Our only funding to date has come from NOAA and PNW based foundations.





THE BENEFITS: Recent studies show that kids today are spending less time outside than previous generations and more time on screens. Yet the fact-based “proof of benefits” from time outdoors and connecting with nature is clear.

- Better school performance.
- Increased health and fitness and improved cognitive function and more creativity.
- Less depression, stress, and hyperactivity.
- More exposure to natural light & outdoor physical activity improves children’s natural sleep rhythms.
- A longer life span and healthier adult life.

OUR “ASK” / QUESTIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE: Oregon’s Outdoor school program has been supported across political, geographical and socio-economic lines. But it only gets kids outside once during their K-8 years. Isn’t that like taking our car into the shop only once every eight years? What about the other critical growth years? Ever more important now in the face of this social media and screen time crisis. What if we had our own Oregon based version of the No Child Left Inside bill introduced in the US Senate by Reed and Collins? What if there was then a cadre of NGO’s that the state of Oregon partnered with to deliver outdoor based programming and curriculum EVERY year K through 8 for a student as they aged, with each component building on the year before?

We urgently need to address this epidemic in Oregon’s schools as it will only intensify if we do not. At CHBC we are an NGO partner doing just that right now, but we urgently need the committee’s help to continue to do so.

We have identified 2 levels of need:

Immediate 2023/24: In order to expand to reach three school districts we need to bridge a \$75,000 funding gap for Winter and Spring programs. This would provide transportation, teacher training and stipends, development of complete video and field based curriculum, field naturalists and educational materials and lunches.

Longer term: A strategic investment in a model that can be exported not only to all Oregon Schools (Our “Raindrop to Sea” programming is a great example of universal education) but also beyond to 36 other NGSS compliant states. Using our video and field based model to develop a bespoke K-8 grade solution to this critical and largely un-addressed need. Funding for our programming would be approx \$125,000 per year to reach several thousand students, but the bigger prize would be to identify key school districts to try this approach with across Oregon. The benefits would be immediate and tangible.

Questions: Are there existing sources of support to meet these two levels of need that the committee can think of? Or are there upcoming efforts/bills that this support could be folded into (Perhaps Summer Learning)? Or does this need/deserve its own bill or legislation?

Contact Information:

Duncan Berry - Co-Director
 duncan@cascadehead.org
 206.697.0204

Cascade Head Biosphere Collaborative
 C/O City Hall
 801 SW Highway 101, Lincoln City OR 97367

cascadehead.org