



TO: House Education Committee

FROM: Oregon Recreation & Park Association

DATE: February 5, 2024

RE: HB 4082 – SUPPORT FOR SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS

The last few years have been hard on Oregon’s children and as we work together try to provide them with more opportunities for learning and growth, parks and recreation agencies statewide urge you to support summer learning programs establishment by the Oregon Department of Education.

Throughout our state, via parks and recreation agencies, children have been offered the opportunity to engage in after school and summer program that afford some an opportunity at academic enrichment and active learning experiences. Your local parks and recreation programs, working with local school districts, develop learning environments with attention to wellness, activities, and outdoor recreation that children might otherwise never have.

We hope that the direction provided in HB 4082 and any funds allocated will also be able to be used for joint summer programs with schools and parks, which assures availability of a variety of learning strategies, well-rounded enrichment opportunities, and hands-on, inquiry-based and project-based learning.

Funds allocated in 2021 and 2022 via the Summer and After-School Learning and Enrichment Grant Program provided for learning programs that helped hundreds of students earn, create and play with such programs as mobile classrooms that brought environmental education programs to schools, parks, libraries, and neighborhoods across the district, and camps on nature and environmental discovery, music, dance, drama, and aquatics.

The health and wellbeing impacts, combined with the critical economic impacts of supporting student growth over the summer cannot be overstated. But more than that, summer programs address socioeconomic, geographic, and racial inequities. According to the Oregon Community Summer Grant Impact Report, grant priorities focused on building partnerships that “close the gap for youths who are underserved by our social systems.” As park and recreation professionals, we see first-hand the impact affordable summer programs plays in serving our communities.

We encourage you to support HB 4082 and provide direction for combining outdoor learning as a vital component of academic enrichment in summer programs.