

February 5, 2024

I am writing in Support of HB 4082 and funding for summer learning.

Because there was no funding available this past summer, our data shows that hundreds of local youth were left out of summer enrichment programs due to the cost. Clubs across Oregon work in close connection with their local school districts, often sharing information and resources to help kids achieve academically, socially, and emotionally. Parents rely on community-based organizations like Boys & Girls Clubs for out of school care and services.

Unfortunately, community-based organizations do not have the same stable funding model as school, and we spend our time and resources fundraising and writing grants so we can keep our doors open to provide a safe place for children and teens.

The burden shifts as soon as the bell rings to parents and community organizations to pick up the last 3-4 hours of the day to keep youth safe and extend their learning. Unfortunately, the burden of funding comes along with it.

Without a doubt, youth, families, and schools benefited from summer programs. Summer programs are full day which allows for deeper learning experience. Our summer programs are available 10 ½ hrs. a day and most youth spend 9-10 hours with us. In that time, we deploy a variety of stealth educational opportunities on academics, health and wellness and valuable life skills, like cooking, managing money and learning how to work through conflict to get along with others.

Oregon believes in education – and education does not end when the bell rings and summer break begins. And quality education requires funding. If the \$50M being proposed for Summer Learning grants is not made available this year, we will once again see children across Oregon who need us most left behind. Our ability to fully fund to meet the need for summer learning in our communities is not possible.

Without consistent financial partnership from the State of Oregon and the Dept. of Education, we will not be able to serve the youth who struggle the most. Their summer will be spent most likely at home, often unsupervised, or caring for other siblings while parents are at work.

Thank you for prioritizing summer program funding in HB 4082 and ask that this funding becomes a priority moving forward to provide consistency so that local communities and families know that summer learning will continue to be an option for all students.

Helen Higgins
President – Oregon Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs

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