

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Nguyen and Members of the House Education Committee:

As Superintendent of Marcola School District 79J, I along with the full support of my entire school board write in strong support of **HB 3941**, which would establish a grant program to support the development and expansion of **community schools** across Oregon. This legislation represents a critical step toward creating the kinds of schools our students—and our communities—need and deserve.

Community schools offer more than a programmatic solution; they represent a **comprehensive, research-based strategy** for school transformation. By integrating academics with health and social services, providing expanded learning opportunities, and building deep partnerships with families and communities, community schools create the **conditions that support student success in every aspect of life**. The MSD community completed integrated activities through; listening sessions, community feedback surveys and direct polling among all stakeholders to establish our Maxims and core beliefs; ***We Care, We Create and We Grow***. The ***HB 3941 was designed specifically for a community based district like ours***.

This model is not theoretical. A growing body of national research confirms its impact. The **Learning Policy Institute** and **RAND Corporation** have documented improvements in academic achievement, attendance, student behavior, graduation rates, and overall school climate. These effects are particularly strong for students in historically underserved communities—students who have too often been left behind by fragmented or compliance-based approaches to school improvement.

What makes the community school model so powerful is that it is **place-based and community-driven**. It invites students, families, educators, and local partners to co-create a school's identity, goals, and strategies. This shared ownership builds trust and strengthens engagement. It also shifts the burden of accountability—**placing it not on individual students or educators, but on the system** to ensure that every child has access to the supports, relationships, and learning experiences they need to thrive. We have taken it one step further and established system audit tools that give us outcome indicators and data points to measure accountability standards that are meeting our goals.

HB 3941 aligns with our district's efforts to build schools where **belonging, connection, and academic excellence** go hand in hand. It offers the resources and framework to sustain that work, grounded in the lived experiences of our communities and the evidence of what works for kids. At MSD we have designed our system to be focused on specific learning needs suited at each level; PreK-6th we teach **Foundations**, 7th-8th students learn about **Connections** (to community/each other) and 9th -12th about **Legacy** (they learn how Community Impact projects

make a difference). Our systematic approach ensures that at every level from PreK- 12th students get what they need to be life ready and productive citizens in our community.

Our students don't need more one-size-fits-all reforms. They need **great schools—right in their neighborhoods—that are built with and for them**. Community schools are a powerful way to deliver on that promise. We also believe in ***Access for All and A Pathway for Each***.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to ensuring every Oregon student has the opportunity to succeed. My personal invitation stands for any of our Salem leaders or lawmakers to visit our humble little district and bear witness first hand on how decisions made in Salem have a direct impact on local Communities. We are a thriving example of how embracing the community school concept can get every kid the support they need to succeed.

Sincerely,



Terry Augustadt

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Superintendent

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