

Submitter: Kim Kellison
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3941

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Neron and Members of the House Education Committee:

As the Superintendent of Silver Falls SD 4J, I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3941, which would direct the Oregon Department of Education to establish and administer a grant program to support the development and expansion of community schools across our state.

Community schools offer a research-backed, equity-centered approach to transforming public education. They create the conditions where all students can thrive by integrating academics with health and social services, expanding learning opportunities beyond the school day, and building deep partnerships with families and communities.

This model aligns directly with what makes a great school: strong relationships, inclusive and engaging instruction, responsive support, and a deep sense of connection and belonging for every student. These are not isolated strategies; they are part of an integrated system that drives student success.

The evidence is compelling. According to research from the Learning Policy Institute, community schools improve student attendance, behavior, and academic outcomes, especially for students furthest from opportunity. The RAND Corporation's evaluation of New York City's Community Schools Initiative found positive impacts on achievement, graduation rates, and school climate. These findings affirm what we see in our own schools: when we address the needs of the whole child and invite families and communities to lead alongside us, schools become more than places of instruction—they become hubs of opportunity, equity, and hope.

HB 3941 represents a critical investment in this vision. It supports not just isolated interventions but a coherent, community-driven strategy for school improvement that aligns with Oregon's commitment to educational equity and long-term impact.

Equally important, the community schools approach shifts the burden of accountability away from students, educators, and families, and places it squarely on the system to create the conditions for success. It recognizes that when students struggle, the answer is not to blame individuals—but to strengthen the structures, supports, and relationships surrounding them.

As superintendents, we are accountable for more than test scores—we are responsible for building schools that engage, support, and prepare every student for a successful future. HB 3941 gives us the tools and resources to do that in partnership with our communities.

I urge you to support this important legislation and help ensure that every child in Oregon has access to a great school in their neighborhood—a school built with, and for, the community it serves.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Oregon's students.

Sincerely,

Kim Kellison

Superintendent, Silver Falls SD