

Submitter: Matthew Stewart-Bradley

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5525

I am writing in support of SB 5525 because I support full funding Oregon's outdoor school for all program. When approved by voters in 2016, and then later funded by the Oregon legislature, Oregon became the first state in the nation to guarantee outdoor school for every child. This innovative and groundbreaking policy has since become an inspiration and a template for efforts in other states to provide outdoor education for all children. Oregon has been a leader in outdoor school since the first outdoor school programs were established in the 1950s. It is crucial that we continue to fund this program, as voters intended, so Oregon can retain our leadership in this field.

Numerous studies have shown that learning outdoors provides educational opportunities for students that are impossible to achieve in classrooms alone. I spent 12 years working in outdoor education and I am now a 7th grade science teacher. I was part of the volunteer committees assembled by OSU after measure 99 was passed in 2016. I have traveled to outdoor school programs all around the western part of the state. I can tell you from firsthand experience that outdoor school is an absolute treasure of our state. Not only does it provide invaluable outdoor science learning experiences for 5th and 6th grade students, Oregon's outdoor school is a world-class leadership development program. When I was director of Whole Earth Nature School, I hired numerous outdoor school alumni as instructors and I found that their caliber was consistently above almost any other instructors I hired. Outdoor school is a uniquely valuable part of public education in Oregon and I urge you to support it by fully funding this obligation.