

# Supporting Outdoor School Oregon Students

## Tips for Writing a Letter to your Legislator

Thank you for joining the effort to save Outdoor School. Following the six steps below will make your letter as impactful as possible. Once finished, send your letter to Gunnar, our awesome high school intern and Outdoor School veteran at [olin.pedersen@gmail.com](mailto:olin.pedersen@gmail.com). We will deliver your letter in person to your legislator on Mon, March 23<sup>rd</sup> at our Legislative Awareness Day. Thank you!

### **Six Tips to Use for Letters**

#### **KEEP IT BRIEF.**

Keep it to one page. Try to discuss only Outdoor School in your letter.

#### **IDENTIFY YOURSELF.**

Begin with an introduction of yourself. Use a simple statement, such as "I am a fifth-grade teacher at \_\_\_\_\_ elementary school" or "On behalf of the members of the \_\_\_\_\_...."

#### **GET TO THE POINT – ask for their support of HB 2648.**

Follow your introduction with a brief statement of the issue, such as “ I am urging your support for HR 2648 to secure lasting funding for every Oregon 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grader to experience Outdoor School”, tell them why it is important to their constituents.

#### **USE SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS.**

*CHOOSE ONE OR TWO ARGUMENTS FROM BELOW-* A few strong, well thought-out arguments are effective. If possible, use bullet points to outline your arguments.

#### **RELATE IT TO HOME. GET LOCAL. BE PERSONAL.**

Cookie cutter letters do not have impact, using personal/local experiences will increase the impact of your letter. Help the legislator understand why your position is important to his or her constituents. Include specific facts and experiences about how Outdoor School will impact educators, students, future career options, student achievement, respect for our natural resources, etc. in your community. If possible, include a personal experience illustrating the benefits of Outdoor School.

#### **CLOSING YOUR LETTER. ALLOW FOR FOLLOW-UP.**

Include your specific contact information and offer to act as a resource should the legislator or staff have questions or need additional information. If you are able, state in the letter that you will follow up your letter with a telephone call.

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### **HB 2648 Supporting Arguments**

Today, approximately 50% of Oregon's 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders are denied the opportunity to experience Outdoor School. Inequitable access to Outdoor School contributes to the Achievement Gap in Oregon schools. Only 5 of Oregon's 36 report 100 % Outdoor School program participation. Four counties report no participation and eight counties report less than 20 percent student participation.

Passing HB 2648 will provide every student with the opportunity, through hands-on learning, to understand the world through their local communities; to connect with their peers, discover their full potential and find their place in the world.

#### **Builds Self-Sufficiency and Leadership Skills**

Instills self-confidence, social skills, leadership potential

Offers High School students experience teaching, coaching, counseling and career paths.

#### **Teaches Children to Collaborate, Work Together and Build Community**

Decreases tendency towards aggression, teaches control of impulsive behavior

Gain better cognitive functioning, increases conflict resolution skills

#### **Drives interest in Science, Technology, and Natural Resource Fields**

*(like farming, engineering and forestry)*

Incorporates STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math core standards

Incorporates Next Generation Science Standards

Uses hands-on science based applied teaching methods

Increases interest in new career paths

#### **Thank you for your support.**

Again if you have any questions please email us.

Gunnar, High School Legislative Intern

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or

Caroline, Statewide Coordinator

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