



**Oregon State**  
**University**

Science & Math Investigative Learning Experiences  
(SMILE) Program  
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March 31, 2026

Members of the Lincoln County School Board,

I am writing on behalf of the SMILE Program at Oregon State University to express our strong support for Siletz Valley Community School as you consider its future.

SMILE has had the privilege of partnering with Siletz since 1989. For decades, Siletz Valley Community School has been a valued and trusted partner in supporting elementary, middle, and high school SMILE clubs. That long-standing partnership reflects the school's deep commitment to its students, families, and teachers, as well as its important role in the community.

Through our work with Siletz, we have seen students grow in confidence, curiosity, leadership, and college awareness. We have seen teachers invest deeply in their students and work in partnership with us to create engaging, hands-on learning experiences. We have also seen families and community members support that work in ways that strengthen both student learning and community connection.

One example that stands out is a project with the Siletz high school SMILE club in partnership with OSU faculty from the Department of Forest Engineering. Students conducted a stream survey project on a tributary of the Siletz River. They obtained permission to access the site, learned field-based survey techniques, worked alongside university researchers and graduate students, contributed to data collection, and completed a project of their own. That work was later presented back to the school, and the teacher used the experience to develop lessons that were shared with other SMILE teachers across the state. It was a unique and impactful opportunity made possible by the strength of the partnership with Siletz Valley Community School.

Siletz Valley Community School has been a wonderful partner in creating these kinds of experiences. Its support for students, teachers, and community-connected learning has created opportunities that are both distinctive and deeply meaningful. We are grateful for our partnership with Siletz Valley Community School and want to clearly express our support for the school, its teachers, its students, and its families. We value this partnership and look forward to continuing it in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Jay Well

Associate Director of Precollege Programs and SMILE  
Oregon State University



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Dear Members of the Lincoln County School Board,

I'm writing in support of Siletz Valley School (SVS) on behalf of Oregon State University's Precollege program department. We have worked with SVS for almost 40 years through the Science & Math Investigative Learning Experience SMILE program, and the Explore & More Program (which was co-developed in partnership with SVS) has just completed year 4. This longstanding partnership speaks to the school's dedication to providing college-connected experiences for students, and represents the only school within Lincoln county which is currently partnered with OSU in these capacities.

Through OSU Precollege, I've worked with teachers and students from 48 schools in 16 districts across Oregon. I can attest that the students at SVS are some of the most intelligent and creative I've had the privilege of working with. The teachers here go above and beyond to create opportunities for their students to learn and grow. Through holistic support, the high school students I work with have regularly been creating undergraduate-level research projects which uniquely link science, technology, engineering, and mathematics principals with Indigenous community values and Knowledges. Alumni from our programs are now attending OSU and Oregon Coast Community College, and have even taken on mentorship roles themselves to give back to their communities.

Closing SVS would be devastating to students, families, teachers, and our own community at Oregon State University who has had the privilege of learning from these students and teachers through our partnership. They have helped us see how Indigenous Science can enrich STEM, and our programs statewide are better for it.

Best,

Amy (AJ) Mallozzi, M.Sc, M.A.T  
Explore & More Program Coordinator  
Precollege Programs Department, Oregon State University

To Whom It May Concern,

I'd like to start out by expressing my appreciation for this meeting being held to hear the community and everyone impacted by recent events and a pending decision.

My name is Dr. Samantha Chisholm Hatfield. I am an enrolled Siletz Tribal member, and am currently a Senior Research Professor at Oregon State University.

I know firsthand the difficulties that Native students face when attending a school systems. It's common knowledge that our Native history has been long, difficult and fraught with difficulties for students and families. What many don't understand is that many of those difficulties remain, even still today. This is one of the reasons Native Americans have the highest drop-out rates and lowest graduation rates 74% in 2019, up from 67% in 2012, according to National Indian Education Association. It is imperative that we foster these numbers locally and continue to provide opportunities for our students.

According to the group Running Strong for American Indian Youth, as of August 2025, 640,000 Native students live in the U.S., and more than 72% attend public schools. This means the vast majority of Native youth are navigating mainstream education systems that often lack Indigenous representation in teaching staff, culturally relevant curriculum, or community-led decision-making. We have a unique opportunity here with Siletz Valley School that has led directly to improving the ratio of representation, and has directly led to increased graduation rates of Native students.

As someone who works in Higher Education, I strive to empower our students any way possible. I've been fortunate enough to work with students that overcame all odds to be able to attend Oregon State, and witnessing the success of a student is incredibly rewarding – especially knowing it is not just the student, but the family, their neighbors, and the extended community who benefits.

For the past few years I've been able to help create and be involved with the Explore and More program that AJ Mallozzi has created. I have been able to assist with supporting and witnessing success with Siletz students that they never would have access to in a public school system. Siletz Valley School provides opportunities, support, and fosters a better sense of community. I implore you to consider not just the logistics of the school itself, but the broader impact it has in our community.

Creating pathways to assist and help the next generations that are becoming our leaders is our responsibility as adults and community leaders in roles such as those we fill. Please keep in mind these are the young people who will create and foster the community we

cherish, and will lead the way for the generation after them. It is up to us to find better options, to teach through example and leave a legacy that can be supported and empowered. You all have before you the opportunity to rectify and “make right” the wrongs that have been done, as well as the opportunity to fulfill the statements of wanting youth to succeed.

We must not fail these students by closing Siletz Vally School.

Thank you for your time,

Dr. Samantha Chisholm Hatfield