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School Overnight Program Returns to IslandWood Campus After Almost 2-year Pause

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA (February 9, 2022) – After an almost two-year pause due to COVID-19, IslandWood has reopened [our School Overnight Program](#). We were thrilled to welcome [Lake Quinault Elementary to our campus last week](#) and to hear the sounds of children and instructors exploring our 250-acre classroom.

While COVID-19 has been very difficult for programs like ours that rely on in-person exploration and connection, children have suffered from the same lack of in-person connection with others and exploration of the world around them.

Last spring, we were part of a movement to create the funding necessary to ensure an Outdoor School for All program for all Washington state students. [The Washington Outdoor School Consortium](#) (WOSC) proposed and succeeded in advocating the Legislature to allocate \$10 million to send particularly vulnerable students to outdoor residential learning experiences this year. While this felt like a wonderful success – it wasn't a success for *all* students. Only 30% of Washington students were served through this funding.

IslandWood, along with others in the WOSC consortium, are working with our legislative leaders to make outdoor school a permanent part of the Washington student experience. House Bill 2078 would establish a permanent Outdoor School for All program in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Governor Inslee has proposed \$52 million in the state budget to ensure that all 90,000 Washington 6th graders can attend outdoor school. As the bill states, “For too many kids, access to the outdoors is determined by race, income, ability, and zip code. Current access to outdoor school is inequitable mostly due to funding and administrative constraints... with funding made available, the Outdoor School for All program (will be) established.”

“We were founded on the belief that every child should have access to meaningful outdoor learning experiences,” says Megan Karch, IslandWood CEO and Legislative Co-Chair of the Washington Outdoor School Consortium. “We have a historic opportunity before us to make sure they *are* made available for all Washington state students. The time is now.”

About IslandWood

Through our experiential environmental education programs for 3rd – 8th graders, teacher professional development series, graduate program, and public policy advocacy, IslandWood is inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards and problem solvers. Programs take place on our 250-acre campus on Bainbridge Island, at the Brightwater Treatment Plant in Woodinville, and in Seattle classrooms, schoolyards, and public parks. IslandWood impacts over 20,000 students and educators each year. Learn more at www.islandwood.org.