

My name is Lillie Bodda, and I'm a 17-year-old junior at Siletz Valley School. I never thought I'd have to write something like this, but the risk and possibility of my school shutting down has made me reflect back on just how much this place truly means to me - not just to me, but to every single student who walks through the front doors each day.

Siletz Valley School is much more than just a building where we attend classes. It has shaped all of us into who we are today. It's where we've learned not only academics, but how to be better people - how to listen, how to support one another, and how to grow. Every one of its hallways, every classroom, every conversation with a teacher has played a role in helping us become stronger, more confident individuals. This school has helped us find ourselves.

One of the most important things that this school has given us is the ability to find the light, even in difficult times. There's a shared understanding here as well that anything can happen, and rather than letting that fear overwhelm us, we choose positivity, we lift each other up. Whether it's a bad day, a hard class, or struggles outside of school, there's always someone here ready to remind you that you're not alone. That kind of environment is rare, and it cannot simply be replaced.

As a community, we've learned how to fight through tough times together. When challenges come our way, we don't fall apart - we come closer. Students, teachers, and staff members continually standing together as a team to work through problems. That sense of unity is what makes this school so special. It's not focusing only on individual success; but collective strength.

Silbitz Valley School offers so many opportunities that truly make a difference in our lives. From clubs and programs that allow us to explore our interests, to one-on-one meetings with teachers who genuinely care about our grades and our futures - this school invests in us. We're not just numbers here. Teachers take the time to sit down with us, guide us, and help us succeed.

We are also given real opportunities to prepare for life after high school. Job opportunities, dual credit classes, and hands-on experience help us build a future while we are still here. We are encouraged to think ahead, to dream bigger, and to believe that we are capable of achieving those dreams.

More than anything, this school has become a safe haven. It's a place where we can use our voices, stand up for what we believe in, and make a difference.

It's where we feel seen, heard, and valued. For many of us, it's the one place where we feel like we belong. And for me, personally, this school means everything.

If Siletz Valley School shuts down, I won't be able to attend another school as if nothing ever happened here. Siletz is irreplaceable. No other school could offer what this one has given to me. The thought of losing it absolutely breaks my heart. This is the ~~best~~ school I have ever attended, and for the first time in my life, I've genuinely felt happy here.

Before coming to this ~~school~~ school, I struggled. I was bullied, and school was a place I dreaded. But Siletz Valley changed that for me. It gave me a fresh start. It gave me a place where I could feel safe, accepted, and supported. It helped me rediscover confidence and happiness that I didn't think I would ever have again. To lose this school would mean losing a place that changed my life.

I'm not just speaking for myself - I'm speaking on behalf of every student who has found comfort, growth, and purpose here. Schools like this are rare. They are necessary. They are life changing.

Siletz Valley School is not just where we learn.  
It's where we become who we are meant to be.

Sincerely,  
Lillie Bodda

A letter of support for keeping Siletz Valley School open:

Dear Lincoln County School District,

I am writing to express my strong support for keeping Siletz Valley School open for our children and our community.

My son, who is currently a junior, has attended Siletz Valley School since fifth grade. Over the years, both he and I have developed meaningful and trusting relationships with the staff. The school has consistently provided him with a safe and supportive environment where he can learn and grow.

As a single mother, I face many challenges managing everything on my own. The teachers at Siletz Valley School have gone above and beyond to offer additional support and communicate with me in a compassionate and understanding way. Their approach has made it easy for me to stay involved and work collaboratively with them to support my son's success.

The teachers genuinely care about their students. They show up for my son, encourage him, and make sure he knows he is valued. In addition to academic growth, the school has helped him connect with his culture through educational and cultural field trips, as well as meaningful classroom experiences that strengthen his connection to both his peers and the community. Siletz Valley School is more than just a place of learning, it is a vital part of our community. If the school were to close, we would lose a supportive environment where dedicated educators are deeply committed to helping our children thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sally Flatt



Debra Barnes <dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org>

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## Leelins letter

1 message

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**Jaimi Justice** <jaimib89@gmail.com>

Sun, Mar 29, 2026 at 11:07 AM

To: Debra Barnes <dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org>

To whom it may concern,

I am a student at SVS. From my first couple of years at the school all of the teachers taught me well and all staff and faculty are very nice, helpful and respectful. I am more connected with my traditions and my tribe through the school then if I was still at Toledo with only one Indian Education teacher. There are some staff there that have gone above and beyond to support me and my friends. They take time to check in on us and help us navigate our feelings. A lot of other schools are not respectful to culture and religion and I take pride in attending a school that supports all. Even if you're not Native American our school still let's those students participate in drumming. Please don't take our school away from us.

Sincerely,

7th grade student

SVS has impacted my life by pushing me through school. When I was younger, I always wanted to skip a grade. In kindergarten I was doing 1st grade work and in 5th grade I was at an 8th grade level. When I hit middle school, Ms. McGraw and Mrs. Barick helped me out and skipped me a grade. In short, SVS helped and pushed me to complete my life goal so I could move on with a new goal.

This school means so much to me and my family. My brother went to SVS and he has a series of mental issues yet the teachers never gave up on him. That is what I love, the teachers truly care and aren't just here for a paycheck. No school is quite like ours in that aspect. The teachers aren't the only ones who care, the students are also caring as well. In this school, a new student could talk to anybody and have a good conversation and make a friend out of it. On top of all that our school also heavily benefits our students. They offer dual credit classes and pay for the college classes. This school offers cultural significance in

many ways that no other school offers. This school is kind, caring, inclusive, beneficial and offers cultural learning.

This school should not close, it is much too important to the students and families.

March 31, 2026

Dear Lincoln County School District,

Siletz Valley School is more than just a school, it is the heartbeat of our small community. It is seeing family at sports games, a warm meal in the summertime, Halloween costume parades through town, Round dances and Mini Pow-Wows, Veterans appreciation ceremonies, and everything in between. The energy pulses through our streets and encourages us all to keep going, keep improving, and keep fighting.

As someone who not only attended SVS from Headstart to graduation, but also was an employee for five years, I've seen the good, bad, and ugly. I've seen SVS thriving and a force to be reckoned with. I've also, recently, witnessed the unfortunate decline that brings everyone here today. The decline is not the result of actions of a single individual but multiple. Leaders who treated our students like their test project. Leaders with an unclear understanding of the job requirements and an inability to adapt. Leaders who enjoyed having the title of Administrator, Board Member, or Manager but did not step up to complete their role in a manner that was required.

And now, we stand today in front of Leaders who hold the ability to lock our school doors permanently rather than provide support for much needed improvement. I understand the history behind this potential decision. The broken promises, the deadlines missed, the incompetence. But I hold hope for the future that is greater than the hurt of the past. I have the utmost confidence that the SVS Board Chair, Jen Metcalf, the board members, and the interim Superintendent, Debra Barnes have not only the ability but the dedication to steer our school in the right direction. Over the previous summer, the school board had many who resigned prior to their term dates, leaving the school and few remaining members in a panic. This current school board has not been given the adequate time to correct the past mistakes of the previous board decisions or lack of.

Our school may be small in size but it is not small in heart. It is not lacking in teachers with a passion to teach, or students with a passion for self improvement, or a community with a passion for school pride. We have not given up on us, so please, do not give up on us. We are Warriors and we are here to prove what that looks like.

Thank you,

Joanna Napoleon

Debra Barnes <[dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org](mailto:dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org)>

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**Letters for the school meeting.**

1 message

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**Taryn Fortin** <[taryn.fortin@icloud.com](mailto:taryn.fortin@icloud.com)>  
To: [dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org](mailto:dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org)

Sat, Mar 28, 2026 at 9:02 AM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the potential closure of Siletz Valley School. This school is not just a place of education to my family—it is a meaningful part of our history, our community, and our identity.

For generations, Siletz Valley School has played an important role in my family's life. It is where memories were made, values were shaped, and strong foundations were built. The impact of this school reaches far beyond academics; it fosters connection, belonging, and pride within the community it serves.

Now, as a parent, it means everything to me that my children have the opportunity to experience the same supportive and close-knit environment that previous generations of my family were fortunate to have. Siletz Valley School offers something that cannot easily be replaced—a sense of community, individualized attention, and a place where students feel truly seen and supported.

Closing this school would not only disrupt education for current students, but it would also take away a vital piece of our community's legacy. Schools like Siletz Valley are the heart of small communities, and once they are gone, that loss is deeply felt for years to come.

I respectfully urge you to consider the lasting impact this decision will have on families like mine and on the community as a whole. Preserving Siletz Valley School means preserving tradition, connection, and opportunity for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

3-17-26

Attending Siletz Valley Schools is important to me because it's a pretty good school. There is not a lot of students and the classes are smaller which gives teachers more chances to work one on one with students. Also it's local to the community, where students can just walk to school and to the store during lunch. Sports is also a good one, even though we don't win many at all, it's still super fun to play and just enjoy ourselves while we have the time. We also get good teachers (sometimes) to where we can bond with them and they can help us in so many more ways.

3/30/26

I originally came to SVS because they were the first school to physically open. I stayed because of the community. To me SVS is a safe, friendly, inclusive community that's hard to leave in a good way. Diverse educational pathways matter because becoming trapped in the 'college only' mindset severely limits the good options that are so much more available to you. While I've been at Siletz, I grown closer to others and I feel like I am slower to judge another because of my experiences at this school.

March 30, 2026

Lincoln County School District  
Board of Directors

**RE: Potential Closure of Siletz Valley Charter Schools**

Nearly 50 years ago, I moved to Siletz, Oregon from Southern California. The Siletz Community has provided me with many opportunities to become a part of the community through volunteer work, civic opportunities, and educational development.

As a parent, I was excited to enroll my daughter in Siletz School's K-12 program in 1979. I was particularly impressed with the high school curriculum, which mirrored my own parochial high school education, by providing coursework that would enable any student to attend higher education colleges or universities because they would have met the academic prerequisites. It was with great sadness that I attended meetings that, in the end, closed our high school and transferred students to Toledo High School in 1983-84 .

I returned to college myself to obtain a Bachelor of Arts and Masters degree in teaching. I was able to be hired with the LCSD and taught at Siletz School until its closure in 2002 and taught at Newport Middle School. During that time, I attended community meetings to try and establish a charter school for Siletz. As partners in education, the Siletz Tribe was instrumental in helping gain a school for our Siletz youth. They realized the value and importance of having a school in our own community. The benefits of having cultural awareness and responsiveness to our community, helped in gaining Siletz Valley Early College Academy charter status for our youth in 2006. The school has progressed to include college classes and Dee-Ni Language and Culture classes that can be taken. Our school is unique and valuable among the Lincoln County schools.

The school, K-12, is an integral part of our community. It has many programs that benefit our student population, through culture, academics, and sports and thus benefit the community as a whole, through their participation in those activities. Our school is like the "life blood" of our community. It even houses our much needed Siletz Food Pantry and gives community members access to supplemental nutrition during these hard times.

As a semi-retired substitute teacher, I can attest to the benefits of having language, reading and math programs at the elementary level that provide consistency for grade

levels. Staff members welcome students at the school entrance with a warm smile to start their day and it helps reassure them that our school is a “safe” place to be. Many elementary students have experienced trauma that your “average” student may not have experienced at that age. Everything from traumatic and sudden death of parents or family members, to temporary placement programs that house them while parents are undergoing substance abuse treatment programs, to learning difficulties that may have resulted from prenatal care. The school, in partnership with CTSI’s emotional support staff, located within the school, helps to address many of these issues. Mentors and other adults within the program offer a resource to immediately address these needs. Attendance is a major focus, and students are rewarded with certificates and “prizes” that encourage them to come to school each day on time and ready to learn.

Middle school students are making progress in their attendance, self-discipline, and academics. Debra Barnes is a principal that provides students with an opportunity to address any bullying issues or other behavioral issues that interfere with their own opportunity to be successful in the classroom. She is consistent and fair. She is also responsive to teachers who may be struggling to cope with these issues.

High school students have experienced their fair share of emotional and generational trauma which has affected their lives, in various degrees from elementary through high school. The Confederated Tribes of Siletz also makes available their emotional support staff for the high school students. The cultural component of their mentorship is extremely valuable to high school students, some of whom may be “unhoused”, to help them navigate the world in general. High school students have wonderful opportunities to become civic-minded citizens upon graduation and have some great role models as teachers, to encourage them to be critical thinkers.

I feel fortunate to have had my children, grandchildren and a great-grand child attend Siletz School and Siletz Valley Early College Academy. Rather than pursue an option of closing our Siletz schools, join with our educational partners, like the Siletz Tribe, Oregon State University, parents, staff, students and community members and others, to help sustain us in our educational endeavors.

Sincerely,

Patricia R. Whetstone  
Proud Siletz Warrior

I haven't always gone to Siletz valley schools  
but SVS has impacted my life in many  
ways, the main thing being is finding my  
best friends out here. SVS to my family  
means I get to be closer to home and  
my parent know mostly everyone in the area  
and their parents so it makes them feel  
safer in a way knowing who everyone  
is so I'm not hanging out with strangers.  
Another big impact our school gave me  
was sports, everything was so nice and welcoming.  
If I was in Jabigget school I don't  
think I would play any sports because  
of the competitive mess of being a team.  
Even though sometimes we do all butt heads  
sometimes we are all and up friends in the  
end. Diverse pathways matter in a school  
because every one learns different. Education  
in culture because "I knew very little  
about their culture until I went here  
and I know way more now."

Siletz Valley School has  
impacted my life in a positive way  
it's made me try classes i don't think  
i would have had in other schools. Wood shop and  
chess are some of them. Partik the  
chess teacher has helped me learn skills  
i wouldn't have thought to learn  
he got me interested in bookkeeping  
and the cooking competitions



Andrea Taylor <ataylor@siletzvalleyschools.org>

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## Letter for school

1 message

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Jessyka Bennett <jessykabennett@gmail.com>  
To: Andrea Taylor <ataylor@siletzvalleyschools.org>

Mon, Mar 30, 2026 at 12:30

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in strong support of Siletz Valley School and to urge you not to close a school that has been such a vital part of our community for generations.

This school is not just a building to me, it is part of my family's history. Generations of my family have gone through Siletz Valley School, and now my own children attend here. That kind of connection is not something you can replace or rebuild somewhere else.

Siletz Valley School has made a life-changing difference for me personally. I truly believe I would not have succeeded in life without the support, structure, and care I received here. The teachers and staff go above and beyond in ways that are rare and deeply meaningful.

Now, as a parent, I see that same impact on my children. My two children, Amadeus and Jade, are both in 8th grade at Siletz Valley School, and their experiences show exactly why this school matters so much.

Amadeus is autistic and has had a very difficult time in school. There were times he stopped attending for months, but the staff at Siletz Valley School never gave up on him. They continued to reach out, support him, and encourage him to come back. That kind of dedication is something you do not find everywhere—it is what makes this school so special.

Jade has completely turned her life around since coming to Siletz Valley School. She used to hate school, but now she is involved in sports, has improved her grades, and is actually engaged and motivated. This school gave her a sense of belonging and purpose that she did not have before.

Without Siletz Valley School, my children would not feel connected or hopeful about their future. This school meets students where they are and helps them grow in ways that truly matter.

Siletz Valley School also provides something that cannot be replaced: its strong connection to Native American culture and community. That cultural foundation creates identity, belonging, and pride for students in a way that other schools simply do not offer.

Closing this school would not just affect education—it would take away a safe, supportive environment that is changing lives, including my children's.

Please consider the real impact this decision will have on families like mine. Siletz Valley School is not just important—it is essential.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Edelhuber

**Debra Barnes** <dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org>

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**#2**

1 message

**Jaimi Justice** <jaimib89@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 26, 2026 at 3:16 PM

To: Debra Barnes &lt;dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org&gt;

The positive impact that SVS has had on my sons life cannot be expressed only by words. Accountability, leadership, long term life skills, positive relationships and cultural ties to name a few. It would be very heartbreaking if our kids had to go to a different school with no cultural ties. The classes other than the core classes are amazing and teach the children real life skills like carpentry and culinary arts. Those are skills that will carry these children far beyond their youth and will give them a look into what they may like to do as an occupation in their adult lives. To have a place that not only nurtures their academics but the heritage that runs through their veins is so uplifting and a joy to witness.

Thank you,  
Mike Justice



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## School closing

1 message

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tanja holliday <tlh0706@yahoo.com>  
To: office@siletzvalleyschools.org

Sun, Mar 29, 2026 at 10:13 PM

I am unable to attend the meeting due to a health issue, but I am hoping that you can get this into the right hands. Thank you.

Dear Valued Stakeholders,

I am Tanja Price, a deeply concerned parent whose son, Noah, a 7th-grade student with autism, stands as a testament to the unparalleled transformative power of Siletz School. I write to you today with an urgent and profound appeal, born from the depths of personal experience, regarding the critical juncture Siletz now faces. The very thought of this irreplaceable institution closing its doors fills me with overwhelming anguish, not only for Noah but for every child who, like him, has finally found their voice, their confidence, and their true sense of belonging within its nurturing embrace.

Before Siletz, Noah's educational journey was a desolate landscape of unmet needs and profound misunderstanding. In previous institutions, his autism spectrum diagnosis was often met with institutional indifference or, worse, treated as an obstacle rather than a unique neurodivergence requiring tailored support. He endured years of marginalization, feeling like an outsider in an environment that should have fostered his growth. The emotional toll was immense, manifesting as plummeting self-esteem, academic stagnation, and a pervasive sense of isolation.

Then came Siletz. For the past two years, this remarkable institution has not just educated Noah; it has \*seen\* him. It has been a sanctuary where the principle of inclusivity is not a policy written on paper but a living, breathing culture embraced by every educator and staff member. Here, Noah is not just accommodated; he is \*celebrated\* for his individuality. This unique ecosystem, meticulously cultivated by its dedicated faculty, has unlocked potential that we, as his parents, feared might forever remain dormant.

The academic transformation has been nothing short of astonishing. Noah, who once struggled to engage, now has achieved honor roll status within mainstream classes – a feat that seemed unimaginable just a few years ago. More profoundly, Siletz has healed his spirit. For the first time, he is forming authentic friendships, participating actively in school life, and experiencing the profound sense of belonging every child deserves. This isn't just about grades; it's about the blossoming of a whole person. The staff at Siletz possess an extraordinary ability to connect with each student, recognizing their inherent worth and tailoring their approach to foster both intellectual and emotional development. They teach beyond the curriculum; they teach \*life\*.

Educators like Ms. Andrea Taylor epitomize this commitment. Her unwavering support, innovative pedagogical methods, and collaborative spirit with her colleagues have been absolutely pivotal in Noah's journey. She is a living embodiment of Siletz's philosophy: not merely to accommodate students with diverse needs, but to actively empower them to reach their fullest potential.

The prospect of Siletz School closing its doors is not merely a logistical decision; it is a direct threat to the fragile progress of countless vulnerable children. For Noah, it would mean the cruel reversal of hard-won emotional stability and academic achievement. It would shatter his burgeoning confidence and extinguish the hope that has finally ignited in his young life. Siletz is not just an educational facility; it is a \*lifeline\* for students like Noah, who have often been failed by more conventional systems. Its unique model of specialized support and radical inclusivity serves as a crucial bulwark against the despair of marginalization. To close it would be to abandon these children, effectively condemning them to a future devoid of the tailored care and understanding they so desperately need.

I implore you, with every fiber of my being, to look beyond budgetary figures and administrative charts. See the faces of children like Noah, whose futures are inextricably linked to the survival of Siletz School. The ramifications of this decision are not abstract; they are deeply personal, affecting the very trajectory

of our most vulnerable students' lives. I am prepared to share Noah's comprehensive educational history and articulate in greater detail the profound, life-altering impact Siletz has had on our entire family. Please, weigh the \*human cost\* above all else before making a final determination that could irrevocably alter the lives of these precious children.

With deepest urgency,

Tanja Price  
860-856-0901

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

## **To Whom It May Concern,**

I am writing with a heavy heart and a deep sense of urgency—an honest plea to *Save Our School*. Siletz Valley School is not just a building or a line in a budget to my family. It has been our stability, our support, and in many ways, our lifeline.

Our journey with SVS began in 2005, when my oldest son walked through its doors as a first grader. Today, more than twenty years later, my youngest son is still a student there. This school has grown alongside our family, shaping not only my children's education, but who they are as people.

When my oldest son, Colton, was just three years old, he was involved in a tragic accident that left him with a learning disability. From that moment on, school was never easy for him. He learned differently, at a slower pace, and often with frustration and self-doubt. SVS saw him—not as a problem, not as a statistic—but as a child who deserved patience, understanding, and individualized care.

The small class sizes, the one-on-one attention, and the genuine compassion shown by the teachers allowed Colton to succeed when many other environments would not have. Every single teacher believed in him, fought for him, and never gave up on him—even when learning was hard. Because of SVS, he found confidence, perseverance, and a sense of belonging.

Colton didn't just receive an education here—he found a family. Through sports like football, wrestling, baseball, and track, he developed lifelong friendships and mentors. He began wrestling in Siletz in 2005 and gained something far greater than medals—he gained support, discipline, and self-worth. Against all odds and with many battles along the way, he graduated in 2017. We still stay in contact with the teachers who helped make that possible, because they forever changed the course of his life.

My youngest son, Cody, has an entirely different story—but the same outcome because of this school. From the moment he began school, he dreamed of graduating early. He is incredibly bright and deeply motivated. When COVID shut classrooms down, he was terrified of falling behind. But once again, SVS stepped up. One dedicated teacher made sure he continued to move forward, even in the most uncertain times.

In middle school, Ms. McGraw helped advance him a grade. Today, Cody is a sophomore taking junior-level and college courses. He has earned high honor roll status for most of his high school career. Ms. Barnes personally reached out to the college so he could begin taking classes at just fourteen years old. Ms. Kosydar worked tirelessly to ensure he could complete English 3 online so he could qualify. These teachers did not see obstacles—they saw potential and did whatever it took to help him reach it.

Siletz Valley School has supported both of my children—one with a significant learning disability and one who is academically gifted—with the same level of care, commitment, and heart. That kind of

environment is rare. Children are not one-size-fits-all, and SVS understands that better than anywhere else I've seen.

The thought of my son not being able to finish high school at SVS is heartbreaking. I honestly don't know where he would receive the same level of support, understanding, and opportunity. This school has been there for my children when they needed it most. It has been there for our family when the road felt impossible.

These children need this school. Families like mine need this school. Once a place like Siletz Valley School is gone, it cannot truly be replaced.

I ask you—please see this school not as a cost, but as an investment in real lives, real futures, and real children who depend on it every single day.

Respectfully,

Christy Simpson



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## Letter of Support

1 message

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**Jolyn C** <jolyn.cripps@gmail.com>  
To: office@siletzvalleyschools.org

Sat, Mar 28, 2026 at 7:04 PM

Hello! This is to whom it may concern:

Siletz Valley has been the home school for my children for 3.5 school years now. My kids know nothing different. Before we moved out here, we lived in Oregon City. So we know the difference in school districts and schools. We LOVE SVS. It's a great community, and when you walk in the school every single staff member knows my children. They know every child in their school, and you cannot say that about larger schools! It helps children feel welcome, appreciated, and helps them stay on track to learn.

Beyond the school itself, we live out in Logsdan. The only other school our kids could go to would be Toledo - and that's over 20 minutes drive from us, Newport is almost 40, and Eddyville School is 30 minutes! How are we supposed to feel like those schools are our community when they're nowhere near us?

It's true there's been some growing pains at Siletz these past 2 years, this year especially, but how do we expect things to get better if we don't give them a chance to?

Not only is the curriculum amazing, I'm going to go back to the community and the culture! My children aren't just learning about math, reading, and science - they're learning about the world around them, the land they live on, and the people who lived on this land before us! They go to the tribal farm and learn about first foods, HANDS ON, not just from a book. There's literally no other school like this, and to take it away would be a crime.

Thanks you for your time,

Jolyn Cripps

Mother to a SVS 4th grader, former SVS 6th grader, and SVS Highschool graduate.

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SVS has impacted my life in a very positive way. Being in the school has taught me about culture and life skills. I feel like I belong even though there are very few black kids, I still feel respected. Diverse education will always matter. Everyone doesn't learn the same. Smaller class sizes means more teacher-student time.



Debra Barnes &lt;dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.or

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**Keep Siletz Valley Students in Siletz**

1 message

**Kyle Rakoz** <rakozink.inc@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 25, 2026 at 9:30 F

To: "dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org" &lt;dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org&gt;

To Whom it May Concern,

As a former teacher at Siletz Valley Schools, it hurts my Warrior Heart to hear that the closure of Siletz Valley Schools is even being considered. If life was simpler for me right now I would put on my Warrior Heart hoody and drive my family the 6+ hours from Washington to be there, but life is seldom simple.

And that's exactly why Siletz students deserve a Siletz School- community schools ease life's pain, and, when done well, enhance life beyond surviving those pains and helps kids thrive.

I started at Siletz when it was near the bottom of state standings, like it is today. I didn't know all the reasons and there was lots of blame thrown around. I'm just a Siletz faculty alumni now, and I hear some of the reasons and a lot of the blame thrown around all the way in Washington. We did it once then, Siletz can do it again now. It won't be cheap, it won't be easy, it won't be simple. Life worth living usually isn't, and what better way to share that lesson with students than fighting for them and showing them it's ok, and even expected, that we all do the hard thing when it really matters.

Kids matter.

Our family saw the way Lincoln County Schools treated Siletz kids like they were not Lincoln County kids... At least not in the good way. They did not support the cultural language nor heritage, nor respect traditions. They did treat them as other. Siletz community members have been treated as "other" before and didn't give up then. Don't give up now.

Once a Warrior, always a Warrior. Warriors fight. I can't be there Tuesday. These words and my thoughts will be in that school Tuesday and always. I encourage those making the decisions to fight too and put your thoughts towards Siletz kids. They're worth it.

Kyle E. Rakoz and family.



Debra Barnes <[dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org](mailto:dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org)>

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## Letter of Support

1 message

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**Dakota McKnight-Todd** <[dakota.mcknight.todd@gmail.com](mailto:dakota.mcknight.todd@gmail.com)>  
To: "dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org" <[dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org](mailto:dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org)>

Thu, Mar 26, 2026 at 7:07 AM

Dear Lincoln County School District Board Members,

I didn't attend Siletz Valley School, but this is something that directly impacts our community.

Lincoln County as a whole is incredibly rural. We cover a large geographic area with only a handful of school zones. When you remove a school from a community like Siletz, you're not just shifting students, you're creating real barriers for families.

If this school closes, many Siletz students will be forced to attend school in Toledo. That means longer commutes, fewer options for families, and limited access to alternative schools like Taft or Newport.

With the long-term closure of Highway 229, those transportation challenges are even more significant. What might look like a reasonable alternative on paper is not realistic for families right now.

There is also a high level of poverty in the Siletz area and limited access to reliable transportation. Bussing students out of town creates additional hardship. Parents may have a much harder time reaching their children in emergencies, attending school events, or staying involved in their education.

This school also serves a large number of students from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. The Tribe is a major presence in our county- culturally, economically, and as a contributor to the broader community. A school that serves so many tribal students plays a critical role in maintaining cultural connection, identity, and community.

From what's been reported, the potential closure is tied to compliance and leadership challenges, not because the school lacks value. That matters. The solution to those problems should be support, stability, and accountability, not removing a school from a rural and culturally significant community.

Siletz has already seen limited access to services, minimal law enforcement presence, limited mail delivery, and now potentially the loss of a local school.

In rural areas especially, schools are more than just places for education. They are hubs for connection, safety, and stability. They give kids a sense of belonging and families a reason to stay and invest in their community.

We should be looking for ways to fix what's broken and invest in what's working, not remove one of the most important parts of this community.

I strongly support keeping Siletz Valley School open.

Dakota McKnight-Todd  
Toledo Resident  
Parent and Small Business Owner

If there are ways I can support the school in addressing these challenges, I would be glad to help where appropriate. I have experience working with financial reporting, compliance, and board processes through my bookkeeping business, and previously worked with Olalla Center supporting compliance for both state requirements and a Lincoln County School District classroom. I would be happy to contribute if it would be useful.



Debra Barnes &lt;dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.or

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## Possible Siletz Closure

1 message

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Chazlynne Williams-Goodell <chazlynne.goodell23@gmail.com>  
To: dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org

Thu, Mar 26, 2026 at 7:31 /

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter today to express my sadness and thoughts after hearing about the school closure for Siletz. I attended Siletz Valley Early College Academy my entire life, from head start to graduation. Too some people just think Siletz is another school, but to me Siletz School was HOME! It angers me to see that things have got this bad too where they are considering closing the school down.

My main issue when it comes to that is Siletz is a comfortable place for students, it's close to home. Forcing children to go to Toledo, Newport or Eddyville would be very overwhelming for some. Especially the parents. The buses would be overflowing, the school classrooms would be at capacity. I went to Toledo for a few months during my middle school age and the difference between Toledo and Siletz was wild to me. There were way too many students in one class, and there were not many options for the one on one learning for students.

Although students have the option to go to other schools in the county, on social media I see most parents talking about homeschooling their students. I do believe many parents would be successful doing that, but it would cause a lot of job loss. I will do anything in my power to make sure this school does not get closed down. This is very unfair to the teachers who work extremely hard. This would be unfair to the students who work really hard. This would be a slap in the face to the culinary students who have built a name for themselves!

With all my opinions being said, I would like to ask. What can we as tribal members do? What can people out of state like myself do for these students? This would cause a lot of issues if the school was closed. How can we help Siletz? What can we do for the staff and students? What is the real main reason for this possible closure? Is it a scare tactic to get more parents involved? I am not accusing anyone of anything I am just generally curious how things have gotten this bad that it is leading to possible closure?

I hope that you don't take this message to heart, but at the same time you do. This really hurts me, and I am 28 now. I graduated 2015. I just believe that this is unfair to those who have put their blood, sweat and tears into making Siletz what it is today! PLEASE do not school this school down, please tell us what we need to do as a community to make this better and how we can fix this!

Sincerely, a broken hearted Siletz Student.  
-Chazlynne Williams Goodell  
(417)684-1817



Debra Barnes &lt;dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org&gt;

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**Letter to save our school!**

1 message

**Jalmi Justice** <jaimib89@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 26, 2026 at 12:17 PM

To: Debra Barnes &lt;dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org&gt;

The Siletz Valley School is so much more than a school. It is community, heritage, cultural traditions, it's family. This school is a safe space for every student to be who they are with the utmost support and guidance.

My child has been a student at the siletz school for 9 years and is a Siletz tribal member and I have two more children I intend on attending there as well when they become of age. I myself personally did not attend SVS but I did attend in the county. As a native American I always envied the students who got to go to a school that supported them not only as students but as native people. Ever since kindergarten my child has come home speaking words from his native language and teaching his father and I things of the culture that we ourselves could not have otherwise taught him. He has always been supported at his school in all aspects of life. The staff members have always taught him to find something he is passionate about and helped him to learn ways to strive in those areas. Our child is very passionate about science and nature, and SVS has helped to guide him to find pathways to research into those avenues.

The first time I attended a SVS assembly I cried. They always open their assemblies with a song on the pow wow drum. This school doesn't only enrich students they enrich the children on a cultural level that empowers these kids on a level that is unmatched.

To have my child attend school at SVS has been an honor and a privilege that I cannot bare the thought of losing. Please do not take that away from these young people.

Sincerely, Jalmi Justice



Debra Barnes &lt;dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.or

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**Please keep the school open!**

1 message

**Nikki Oliphant** <nikkioliphant.93@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 26, 2026 at 1:59 F

To: Dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org

Hi my name is nikki oliphant, I went to school in siletz at svcs for 3rd grade back in the early 2000s when the school first opened and then again for 6th, 7th and 8th grade. Although I didn't go to svcs for my whole childhood like some folks it did make a huge impact on my life throughout those 4 years compared to any other school, not only was siletz school generally always kind and welcoming but even when kids were mean it was home, people had my back and weren't going to see me get hurt, I grew my support circle and group of friends who helped me in those times of being bullied & to this day are still the only friends I carry with me, everyone else from Lincoln country has drifted away honestly and that just shows me how close knit siletz community is and how much they need that school and the chance to gain that just like I did.

I also was taught about my roots there and where my some of my family was from, the only teachers to ever go out of their way to teach their students the athabaskan or if they were taught a different language we did have teachers trying to teach us these things with the educational resources they were given. No one can say these child aren't taught or given the opportunity to learn other languages because they do as best as they can.

Svcs was also the only school I outright vividly remember being taught art and being taught how to care for other individuals like them allowing the middle schoolers to help with the younger kids, i feel for people who want to become teachers or caregivers that is so important for them especially in the years of them growing & same with the arts, we painted a mural on that school in middle school, no stipulations, just be creative and it had to be a self portrait, it was the only art project I remember enjoying in school because of the freedom to do what we wanted and be our authentic self.

I genuinely believe it was the only school as well to be on top of my grades and compliance as well as my brothers, they didn't do anything about grades or report cards or keeping discipline consistent anything like that at toledo middle or high-school the years we went and honestly it was only when I started going to toledo that I wanted nothing to do with school and struggled with wanted to attend, svcs never made me feel this way it was always a wonderful impact.

I hope everything works out sincerely.  
-nikki oliphant



Debra Barnes <[dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org](mailto:dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org)>

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## Public Hearing

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Jordan Smith <[jordan.smith@siletzvalleyschools.org](mailto:jordan.smith@siletzvalleyschools.org)>  
To: Debra Barnes <[dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org](mailto:dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org)>

Mon, Mar 30, 2026 at 12:21 PM

Dear Members of the Lincoln County School Board,

I joined Siletz Valley School this January as a middle school humanities teacher. I am not from this community, and I do not claim any personal or cultural ties to Siletz. What I can offer is my direct experience working with the students, families, and staff here over the past three months.

As you consider whether to continue the District's charter with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, I ask that you weigh this decision against the District's mission to develop passionate learners and responsible citizens, its commitment to continuous improvement, and its vision of supporting every child, every day.

Siletz Valley School is a place where those values are actively lived out. The students here have a great deal to be invested in. They are part of a community with strong cultural traditions, deep family connections, and a clear sense of identity. That is not separate from their education, but a major part of what makes them engaged learners. The school plays an active role in reinforcing that connection, and as a newcomer I have seen how much it matters in shaping both student motivation and perspective.

Many of our students face real and ongoing challenges that have plagued their families for generations. Some families are in the process of rebuilding stability; others are still working toward it. Many are leading the way with education, artistic expression, and strong community involvement. In that context, the school provides consistency, structure, and relationships that matter.

As conversations about the school's future have circulated, students have expressed clear concern about what they might lose: a learning environment where they feel physically safe. Several have shared concerns about returning to environments where they have experienced racism and violence from their peers, and a lack of support from staff. That concern should be taken seriously.

I understand there are compliance issues that must be addressed. I do not have full insight into how those developed, but I do know the people currently doing the work. This is a staff that reflects, adapts, and takes responsibility. There is a shared understanding that improvement is necessary, and a collective willingness to meet that expectation. This staff lives in continuous improvement and models it, and the resilience it requires, to our students.

Our commitment to improve is visible in the specific, ongoing actions of the people here. Virginia Thompson continues to advocate for her students long after they leave her classroom, supporting both them and the teachers who follow because she refuses to let them fall through the cracks. Kent Rilatos, who is deeply connected to this community, works to ensure students are understood and supported in ways that are both firm and appropriate. Alongside Theresa Smith, he helps integrate culture into both academic and extracurricular learning so that students see real value in their education. Debra Barnes consistently pushes us to look beyond surface behaviors, to address root causes, and to support students in building lasting change rather than short-term compliance. This is a team that is invested for the long term.

In considering the future of this charter, I urge you to look closely at what is happening on the ground and recognize the role this school plays in meeting the District's stated mission. Siletz Valley School is not a perfect institution, but it is a purposeful one. It is a place where students are challenged, supported, and known. It is a place where adults are actively engaged in improving their practice in service of those students. For the students it serves, this is their daily environment for learning, growth, and stability. This school is contributing to the development of capable, connected, and responsible young people who will help build the future of all of Lincoln County.

Sincerely,

Jordan Smith

Humanities Teacher



Debra Barnes &lt;dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org&gt;

## Support Siletz Valley School

1 message

**Kayleen Davis** <kayleend25@gmail.com>  
To: dbarnes@siletzvalleyschools.org

Tue, Mar 31, 2026 at 11:03 AM

Please Save Our Siletz School, the Siletz Children deserve & need their home town school.

I moved to Siletz from Toledo in 1973, just after the beginning of my sixth grade year and graduated from Siletz in 1979. I loved Siletz School, being a small school with a real sense of community, belonging, and built lifelong friendships. I was a shy child, in Siletz I felt the comfort, the sense of belonging, a growing bond with class/schoolmates, teachers, support staff (my favorite was my bus driver, my mom, many of our parents/family worked within the school in one way or another). I became more confident, I participated in sports, I loved drama and participated in several school plays, I was an honor student, which I attribute to the Siletz Teachers/Support Staff, their flexibility to work with each student and smaller class sizes. I was a cheerleader, I really found my voice!

I remember the strong support of the Siletz and surrounding community for our local school while a student and see it now. I didn't realize at the time the bond that was being built not only with our class/schoolmates, building lifelong friendships, but also with their families, teachers, the community, a strong sense of belonging, acceptance, a bond that for myself has lasted for life. I was sad when I learned a couple years after I graduated that our Siletz School was going to be closed and Siletz students would be bussed to Toledo. I thought, how very awful this would be for the Siletz Students, I knew the transition would not be easy, I feared the Siletz students would lose their sense of belonging, their safety, their Warrior pride, their bonds they had built with their class/school mates, teachers, support staff, with the community. I worried the Siletz students would be bullied, harassed, not "fit in" and that many would not continue with sports or other school activities. I learned recently this was the case as I feared. One of my schoolmates who had the misfortune of being a freshman the year of the change, her story hurt my heart. I was not wrong in my concerns, it was as bad and worse. Please do NOT do this to the Siletz Community children/students!

I was happy to see the Siletz Charter School open. I watched their progress and know there are and have been challenges, but I also continue to see the community support for our local little school and those working so very hard to make the Siletz School succeed for our local children. A few years ago two of our grandchildren came to live with us for several months. Our granddaughter attended Siletz School, she fit right in and loved it and I felt comfortable knowing she was close, in a school where I knew many of the school team, as well as students and/or their grandparents/parents/families. There it was that sense of belonging, that bond, that Warrior pride. I was happy to know that the local community children have once again, including my granddaughter.

This last summer my bestie, also Siletz alumni, and I went to the open house at the school. It was fun to see the school now and also to reminisce when we were students, from elementary to graduation. We were very impressed with the school! The Culinary Class, in the same room we had Home Ec., is awesome! I have been very impressed with all Siletz Culinary class, all their accomplishments, well quite frankly speak for themselves for anyone that has followed them. Their involvement with the local community is heartwarming, there it is again that BOND, that sense of Community, of belonging, helping and supporting each other, there is NO replacing it. Again my heart hurts for those Siletz Students that lost this, I hope that this will not happen to our Siletz Students again. To go hand and hand with the culinary class, a garden area with an impressive variety of vegetables growing. We also discovered the horticulture classroom, also very impressive, with displays of native edible plants, native foods, culture, teaching life sustaining survival skills, which sustained people for generations. They also had various plants growing, various projects out on display. The Siletz students have made some awe inspiring woodwork!! Our Warriors are also doing amazing in various sports. The outpour of support for our Siletz Warriors is as it always has been STRONG, our Community Loves our Siletz Warriors and it shows! Many of these and future students may not be able to continue with sports if they are bused to Toledo.

There are so many benefits to the students in having their town school and there are also many negative effects in taking away a student's town school and busing them to another town. These negative effects include longer bus rides, which is really for those who have motion sickness, causing many to have to get on the bus earlier and get home later. Many students will not be able to participate in sports or other after school activities, community roles and support. That bond is lost, the sense of belonging, that safe feeling, which can and does cause loneliness, depression, taking a toll on their education, as well as their wellbeing, their mental and physical health. There is also the issue of the Toledo Students as well, including the increase of class sizes.

I understand that there have been issues with the Siletz School, issues that are the fault of adults, not the children. The Siletz School Faculty, School Board, Community are working hard to correct these issues and make corrections to ensure a continued building and improvement of the Siletz Valley School for the children of the Siletz area. Please continue to support and keep our Siletz Valley Charter School.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kayleen Davis

**3/31/2026**

**Lincoln County School Board  
Siletz Valley School  
245 NW James Frank Ave  
Siletz, OR 97380**

To whom it may concern:

My name is Katya Rilatos, I will be a future parent of a kindergarten student at Siletz Valley School. I am writing to formally request that the Board vote against the closure of Siletz Valley School.

As a Newport High School alumna, I see the importance of a small class size school like Siletz Valley, especially now as a parent of two kids who are descendants of Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

The staff at Siletz Valley are trained to address the unique needs of our students, including the Indian Education program, the culinary program, the Drum Groups, and so many others. Moving these students to larger, less specialized environments risks alienating them and widening the achievement gap. This school represents a safe space that honors their heritage and fosters a sense of belonging that they cannot find elsewhere. Closing this school risks breaking the crucial connection between our children and their language, culture, and traditions.

We need to be investing in our local Native education, not dismantling it. Please keep Siletz Valley School open to continue providing a high-quality education and a stable environment for our students.

Sincerely,

Katya Rilatos

Concerned youth coach, parent, & community member

[katyamel011@gmail.com](mailto:katyamel011@gmail.com), 541-270-0521