



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Jay Dixon, Commissioner

March 5, 2015

Co-chairs Monroe and Komp; and
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Sub-Committee on Education:

I am Benton County Commissioner Jay Dixon, vice-chair of the Youth Development Council, and co-chair of the Association of Oregon Counties Public Safety Committee. I write to ask you to enhance the Youth Development Council budget recommended by the Governor's office, and I apologize for being unable to appear before you in person.

Youth Development Council work is aimed at youth ages 6-15 that are at risk of disconnecting from education and future workforce, and those ages 16-24 who are already not in school and not working. These are the young people who are largely overlooked by early learning and other programs aimed at a more stable youth population. They make up a large portion of those identified in disproportionate minority contact reports. Yet funding for programs serving these youth is flat in the Governor's recommended budget.

Youth Development Council funds support community organizations that provide services to these kids in their communities. They are often the only services they receive. The recommended budget provides only 39 percent of the amount requested by local communities to do work that keeps these kids in school and out of the juvenile justice system.

I urge you to increase the community investment appropriation for YDC from \$4.5 million to \$11.5 million in order to keep these successful community programs operating. Programs like the STEM project in Marion and Polk Counties that equips middle school girls with skills and competencies that allow them to succeed in high school and beyond.

Like the Hood River County program, that improves Hispanic student outcomes. Like the Siletz Community Restorative Justice Project aimed at youth offenders in Lincoln County. Or, like the middle school African-youth gang prevention project in Multnomah County.

And many more. Please help us help these most vulnerable kids.



Commissioner Jay Dixon

JD/lg