



Education Subcommittee of Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

March 15, 2017

Co-Chairs Monroe and Smith Warner, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network, I am writing to express *our strong support* for farm to school and school garden programs and to request that funding for Farm to School Grants are included at Current Service Level of \$1.2 million, in the Department of Education's Budget.

The Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network's mission is to improve the health and well-being of youth, families, farms, and the environment by supporting members of Oregon's farm to school and school garden community in their work to incorporate healthy, local food into school meals and implement food and garden-based education. Our Network is made up of over 900 participants including representatives from over 500 businesses, organizations and agencies including school districts, food producers, non-profit organizations, public agencies, and other stakeholders involved with farm to school and school garden programs in Oregon.

Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools.

Students gain access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities such as school gardens, cooking lessons and farm field trips. Farm to school empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities.

Kids win: Farm to school provides all kids access to nutritious, high quality, local food so they are ready to learn and grow. Farm to school activities enhance classroom education through hands-on learning related to food, health, agriculture and nutrition.

Communities win: Farm to school benefits everyone from students, teachers and administrators to parents and farmers, providing opportunities to build family and community engagement. Buying from local producers and processors creates new jobs and strengthens the local economy.

Farmers win: Farm to school can serve as a significant financial opportunity for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers by opening the doors to an institutional market.

Please do your best to ensure that the Oregon Department of Education's budget includes funding for Farm to School Grants at Current Service Level. These grants are administered by Oregon Department of Education, to reimburse school districts for their purchases of Oregon grown and processed foods and for food-based, agriculture-based or garden-based educational activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Kemple". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Megan Kemple  
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