

Chairman Clem and members of the committee,

My name is Chloe Turner.

I am an 8th grader at Parrish middle school in Salem.

I hope you will support House Bill 2579, to expand funding for Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden programs.

*The Salem-Keizer School District received farm to school education and procurement grants through the Department of Education for 2017-2019.*

I was fortunate that the elementary and middle school I attended had school gardens and programming. In the garden I learned much about how to plant, grow and take care of different kinds of vegetables, fruit and flowers. I discovered new delicious fruits and veggies that I wouldn't normally eat on my own and how to prepare them (such as arugula and kale). I experienced how calming and fulfilling it can be to garden and how it can bring out "another side of people." Which is a good side.

At Grant It brought so much joy to me and others when we walked into the cafeteria for lunch to see Ms.Brenda with the tasting table that had colorful, bright foods on them. Colored carrots and arugula were my favorite.

Each thursday I was excited to see what the harvest of the month was on the salad bar in the cafeteria. Oregon grown fresh fruits and vegetables certainly made Salem Keizer school lunches better.

I participated in many things by being involved in the garden. I did after school programs, my classes did projects with Ms.Brenda, my fifth grade class even went every week during the summer of six grade to help keep the garden (and our minds) growing. Ms.Brenda spends time each week mentoring my leadership class in our Parrish school garden. My role in leadership is the garden coordinator. And it's my hope that the kids at our school will be inspired to grow and eat these wonderful foods when they spend time in the garden or try something new. It's not only the plants growing when we are in the garden, it's the kids too. The skills we gain while working together help us become a better leader.

The first time our leadership class went to the garden this school year, grapes were hanging from the arbor and we all just started eating them. The grapes were so good and we loved seeing each others reactions to them. We bonded as a class harvesting and eating grapes!

I'm so thankful for what I've experienced through the years in the garden. I've made many mistakes (such as harvesting all the onions to early) and I've made many discoveries. I hope that all kids can grow up with an even better experience than I got.

