



NORTHWEST HEALTH
FOUNDATION

March 4, 2019

Dear Chair Doherty, Vice-Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Helt and members of the House Committee on Education,

Every child deserves the best education we can offer them – an education that sets them up for health, opportunity and success throughout their lives.

Right now, Oregon doesn't offer that education to many of our children and youth, especially our children and youth of color. We have the third lowest graduation rate in the country. Graduation rates are far lower for Black and Native American students than white students. Four out of five children from families with low incomes, also disproportionately children of color, aren't reading proficiently by third grade. And three out of four children from families with low income don't have access to high-quality early learning programs.

We know one of the most effective ways to improve future academic success is through high-quality early learning programs. Northwest Health Foundation, in seeking to meet a need the state has neglected, has funded several organizations, including Latino Network, Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality and Native American Youth and Family Center, that run incredible, effective, culturally-specific early learning programs. We've met some of the parents and their children. We've witnessed how these programs change lives for children of color and their families. But these organizations can't reach every child in their communities without more support than foundations and individual donors can give.

The state has a responsibility to invest in these programs. They work. They should be available to every child in Oregon. That's why we ask you to support the Early Childhood Equity Fund.

Sincerely,

Jesse Beason

President & Chief Executive Officer

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