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**United Way of the
Columbia-Willamette**



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To the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

Chair Frederick and Chair McLain,

Please accept this brief written testimony asking the subcommittee to preserve full funding of Early Learning Hubs in the Early Learning Division budget.

Early Learning Hubs are the local early childhood system for every community in Oregon. They are the means by which families from underserved communities give voice to the design and delivery of essential services such as child care, preschool and family supports.

Our state's early care and education system depends on the local knowledge of the hubs and on the funds they have to make specific and effective investments that directly benefit the lives of children and families.

Additional information on specific impacts of the early learning hubs in Multnomah and Washington is attached.

Thank you for your consideration.

DocuSigned by:

Cindy Adams
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Cindy Adams

President and CEO, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette

Early Learning Hubs

LOCAL EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS THAT ARE ALIGNED, COORDINATED, AND FAMILY-CENTERED

Advancing equity

Early Learning Hubs are the local conveners of the early childhood system. They bring parents, community partners and school districts together to coordinate the services that support young children and their families. **In Multnomah County and Washington County our hubs are focused on building early learning systems that are free from bias and give every child what they need to learn and grow.**

Supporting children to enter school ready to succeed

Connecting families and schools in all school districts across the hub region

Hub investments create a **family-friendly school climate** and a **more successful transition to kindergarten** by:

- Focusing on what families from communities of color need in order to connect with schools
- Providing support to kindergarten teachers
- Offering social service supports and connecting families to resources
- Building parent leadership skills
- Co-designing a Sign Up for Kindergarten campaign with parents from communities of color

Engaging parents in decision-making and driving policy in their communities

Partnering with parent leaders from communities of color

In Multnomah County the Parent Accountability Council (PAC) ensures that family voice guides the hub's work. Parents from **Black, African immigrant, Asian, Latino, Native American and Slavic communities** form the council. The PAC is the hub's primary governance body and is an active partner with Multnomah County Commissioners to bring community voice into policy recommendations for the expansion of publicly funded preschool through the Preschool for All initiative.

In Washington County parents from the Early Learning Washington County Parent Advisory Committee participate on the Executive Committee for the hub ensuring that **parent voice is part of all decision-making**. In its strategic planning, the hub elevated family voice through the participation of 470 families, 368 of which were identified as being from communities of color. Parents from the PAC also participate in other governance groups and co-lead numerous projects such as advocacy work with local legislators or STEM county-wide framework.

Connecting families to the services that are right for them

Ensuring the Raise Up Oregon strategic plan includes local communities of color

This summer hubs will develop and implement the essential function of coordinated enrollment for 3-4 year olds as part of Oregon's commitment to expand quality early care and education opportunities across the state. Hubs will **directly support currently underserved families** in accessing and identifying the preschool/childcare setting that meets their family's needs. This function is an essential element in the success of Oregon's expanding Early Childhood Education system and the achievements of the Raise Up Oregon Strategic Plan.

