

March 14, 2021

Co-Chair Senator Frederick

Co-Chair Representative McClain and members of the committee

For the record my name is Beth Unverzagt, 7564 SW Thornton Dr. Wilsonville, Oregon
503-551-5488

For the past 16 years we have developed the Oregon state afterschool network - [OregonASK](#). Today, I want to express my gratitude for your leadership and support of the provisions in the Summer Learning and Care Package. We want to thank Governor Brown, her staff, Department of Education and Early Learning Division.

I also want to take a moment to thank the thousands of individuals that make-up the school age workforce. Since March of 2019 many who work in child and youth development have lost their jobs while other afterschool and summer learning programs have continued to meet the challenges of COVID-19 by providing virtual and in-person programming to children grades Pre-K through 12, assisting parents with access to technology and other supports, delivering meals to families, and so much more. They have been the backbone of emergency childcare.

Now and in the future, in partnership with schools, these programs will have a critical role to play for the rest of this school year, this summer, and into 2022 and beyond. The additional education and child care funds provided to Oregon must go a long way towards ensuring that there are programs to support families and students in need. In OST programs activities cover the entire spectrum of student interest for all age levels, including outdoor activities, performing arts, robotics, and other instructional STEM activities.

Researchers and educators are deeply concerned about the effects of COVID on children's learning and development — and the impact of school closures, disruptions and trauma brought on by the pandemic. In one set of studies released by NWEA, a nonprofit research organization, researchers documented a significant widening of academic achievement gaps by income and race last spring, which was further exacerbated by school closings and disruptions this fall. Other researchers are reporting increases in students' social-emotional problems as a result of the trauma and disruptions brought on by COVID. The work by NWEA and others is highlighting that children growing up in under-resourced families and communities are going to be in particular need of high-quality afterschool and summer programs. However, because of the financial disruptions being experienced by many low-income and working families — and because of the budget shortfalls facing many communities — children who most need high-quality afterschool programs will likely have less access to these programs and services.

To address these serious issues, a coordinated response is going to be needed — one that brings together the resources of early childhood programs, afterschool programs and schools.

We believe programming must be inclusive of the enrichment, academic, and mental health support that students need. **We believe culturally-specific and relevant opportunities must be offered to be inclusive of all children, including students who experience disability and those who do not speak English.**

As our state legislature, schools and communities move into the recovery process we encourage you to read several documents that have been created over the last several years. We have captured some critical information for Oregon's future.

First, is the [Access and Equity Report on Afterschool in Oregon](#), is two years of data collection on Oregon programs and was released here at the legislature in January of 2019. This report can help guide investments for increasing access to programming across the state. We know what the issues are and must solve them together.

Second is the [Reimagine Oregon Report](#) developed with funds from the National League of Cities and our Workforce Investment partners. These stakeholders from over 150 industry and government partners discussed and expressed ideas for recovery. (released August 2020). This report clearly outlines the voices of industry with four recommendations highlighting child care and youth works programs: 1. Establish purpose centered partnerships to aid in recovery, 2. Explore shared emergency funds, shared service models, and other jointly- supported efforts to meet local and regional needs, 3. Launch "sandboxes," innovation labs, or similar anchors for testing, sharing, and learning about promising practices and approaches., 4. Designate or implement shared platforms for working, learning, learning and communicating with Oregonians themselves.

Third is a [Return on Investment for Afterschool in Oregon](#), which we have released this week. As you can see, **for every dollar Oregon invests in afterschool programs, \$4.60 is returned to our state through reduced drug and alcohol addiction, increased graduation rates, reduced crime rates, and lower healthcare costs due to increased physical activity.** OregonASK is proud to share this report demonstrating the qualitative data we have seen ring true for years; **participating regularly in high-quality afterschool programs benefit youth, families, and our state at large.**

We hope you take a few minutes to review the data and recommendations provided highlighting the impact and future vision for afterschool and summer programs in Oregon.

I want to mention another important piece of research. Dr. Deborah Vandell from the University of California at Berkley has studied afterschool since 1983. In a seminal study released last year. Dr. Vandell found, "Children who received higher quality ECE **and who had sustained participation in afterschool organized activities demonstrated higher academic achievement in high school.** These effects on academic achievement were additive — with the effects associated with afterschool programs building on or adding to the early care effects. Importantly, the effects associated with early care and afterschool care also were exactly the same size, indicating that both are good investments."

Last year the historic Supporting Student Success Act included provisions for afterschool programs as allowable expenses and allocated \$3 million for summer learning, it stopped short of creating funding dedicated to afterschool.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare our shortcomings and our long-standing failure to support school-age afterschool and summer programs for our highest need children and families and the supports needed for working families. And yet, today we have the pieces to build a stronger system right in front of us. We know that afterschool programs provide critical infrastructure support to working families. We have proof that afterschool programs support academic learning, provide opportunities for new experiences, and encourage emotional and physical health. We now have proof that afterschool programs are a sound public investment with high returns.

Today, we have the rare, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build our systems and structures better than they were before. Historically, our state has set aside dedicated funding streams to support schools and early learning programs, and yet none for school-age youth during non-school hours. Today, we take steps to support afterschool and summer learning, today is an important pivotal point. Together we have an exciting moment of opportunity. Let's plan together for our future.

Thank you again for hearing the voices of the children and families in our communities and providing these needed afterschool and summer learning funds!

AFTERSCHOOL IN OREGON

Return on Investment

Every **\$1** invested in afterschool programs leads to a return on investment of **\$4.60**

Youth who participate in high-quality afterschool programs on a regular basis:



have better attendance rates and better grades



are more likely to graduate high school



are less likely to be addicted to drugs and alcohol



are less likely to be involved in the justice system



are more physically active

These benefits can translate into millions of dollars of savings for Oregon:

COSTS
\$123,870,102

to subsidize¹ afterschool programs for every youth in Oregon who wants to attend one

RETURNS
\$569,357,811

returned to society from afterschool programs

\$51,744

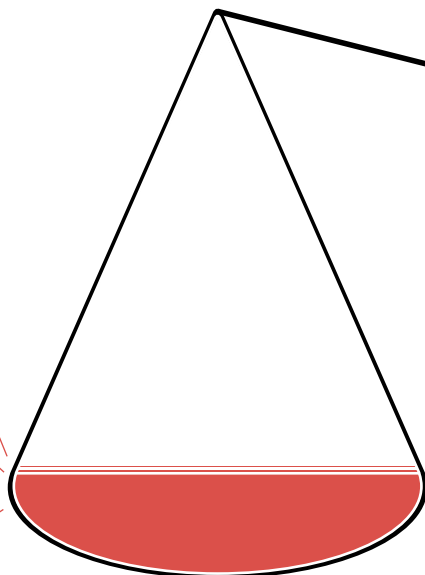
in additional state funding due to increased college enrollment

\$1,005,858

in increased schooling costs due to fewer dropouts

\$122,812,500

in investment costs



\$3,253,516

from reduced grade repetition

\$41,244,849

from increased graduation rates

\$3,829,098

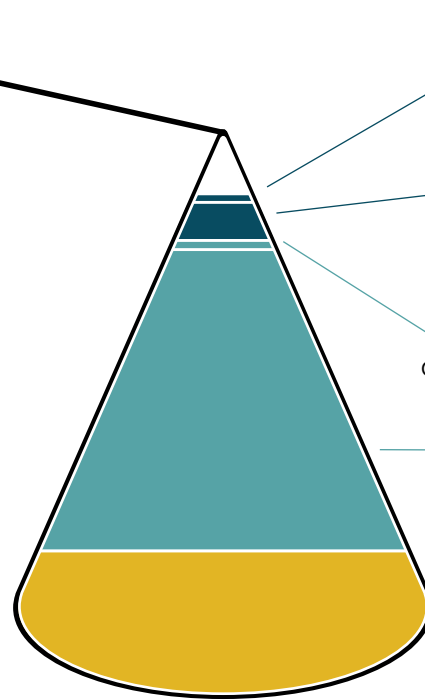
from reduced drug and alcohol addiction

\$353,400,720

from reduced crime costs

\$167,629,628

from reduced obesity-related healthcare costs



This return on investment study uses existing research and Oregon-specific data to estimate the returns from a theoretical public investment in afterschool programs. Read more at oregonask.org

¹ The investment amount is based on current funding practices for Oregon's 21st CCLC grant-funded programs, which assume that grantees will leverage additional funds and in-kind resources, such as administration support and free building use.