



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Oregon achieves . . . together!

Colt Gill

Director of the Oregon Department of Education

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
Salem OR 97301-4048

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Emergency

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) respectfully request an increase of \$250,000,000 in General Fund and \$21,207,224 in Federal Funds to support public schools, early learning and child care providers, and community based organizations in providing academic learning and enrichment opportunities for Oregon's children and students during the 2021 summer.

Background

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on Oregon's children, youth and families, disproportionately impacting historically underserved populations and rural communities. Since March 2020 when Oregon schools were closed due to the COVID-19 emergency, Oregon's educators and early learning providers have strived to ensure the continuity of education and care for every student by implementing or supporting distance learning. While this model of instruction has been necessary until now to ensure health and safety, it is clear it has not been optimal for student learning and engagement. In addition, the lack of in-person instruction has posed challenges for working families who relied on education and care during school hours.

As Oregon begins to turn the corner in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and vaccinating all Oregonians, it is imperative we begin addressing the harm that has been done to Oregon's children and students during the pandemic. This harm ranges from significant negative impacts on student learning to social and emotional trauma. This is most clearly seen with high school where, in some districts, up to 50% of students are currently failing at least one course. While this varies from district to district, when compared to the ninth grade on-track data for the previous school year of 14.9%, it demonstrates that in-person learning is desperately needed.

In addition to a decrease in high school students who are on-track to graduate, the damage COVID-19 has had to the social and emotional well-being of our children and students is equally troubling. Both students

and children have endured months of social isolation, unable to interact with friends, family, and teachers, and in some cases, to access mental health services offered by schools.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that, in 2020, there was a 24% increase in emergency room mental health visits for children ages 5 to 11, compared to 2019. For adolescent ages 12 to 17, that increase was 31 percent. More troubling, while youth depression and suicide rates have been climbing over the last decade, the isolation and hopelessness brought on by the pandemic has exacerbated this trend. Last summer, the CDC reported that one in four young adults had contemplated suicide in the previous month.

Research conducted by the University of Oregon since the start of the emergency has shed light on the fact that families with young children are also struggling, in particular because the pandemic is creating material hardship for a large percentage of families with young children, especially BIPOC families. Families with children under five are reporting experiencing difficulties paying for basic needs, such as food, utilities, and childcare. This leads to emotional distress among caregivers, which is predictive of emotional and behavioral difficulties for young children.

Agency Action

Oregon students are re-entering the classroom this spring for hybrid or full in-person instruction in many districts. This in-person contact, peer-to-peer engagement and direct instruction is essential for our children's ongoing learning, and emotional and mental well-being. As vaccines and many other mitigation efforts are reducing community case rates and making it possible to return to in-person learning, it is critical that we seek opportunities for additional support services and supplemental learning time. A critical opportunity lies in the upcoming summer months when public schools, early learning and child care providers, and community based organizations together can provide critical continuity in education and necessary support for children, youth and families. This includes a range of options best suited for each child and student that includes engaging enrichment and learning opportunities, and wraparound services, including mental health support. The Oregon Department of Education is proposing \$250 million of General Fund and \$21.2 million in Federal Funds to be leveraged with an additional \$55.2 million of district funding from the federal stimulus or other resources, to meet the following objectives:

- Academic and enrichment programs for as many children and students that wish to participate, including wrap around care.
- Academic summer school to support high school students with credit loss.
- Child care and early learning program opportunities for children birth to 5 years of age.

To accomplish these objectives, ODE is proposing to invest \$205.6 million of General Fund and Federal Funds for grants to school districts to fund summer school for high school students; academic and enrichment programs for K-8 students; and wrap around child care services for low-income, working families with K-5 students that wish to participate in academic and enrichment programs. In addition, the Department, through the Early Learning Division (ELD), proposes to invest \$23.2 million of General Fund and Federal Funds for existing programs to provide early learning and child care services for 5,000 children from birth to 5 and children with disabilities. Lastly, the Department will use \$41.2 million of General Fund of the proposed

funding to award a grant to the Oregon Community Foundation for two purposes: 1) \$40 million for school-aged children to participate in enrichment programs offered through public and non-profit organizations that provide community-based services across the state, and 2) \$1.2 million for children (Birth-5) and families that supports social and emotional development, family well-being, and kindergarten transition. The remaining \$1.2 million of this request would be used for administrative operations for both ODE and ELD.

Summer Enrichment/Academic Program Grants (K-8 Students) – \$93.7 million

ODE will provide funds for school districts to offer extracurricular classes and/or activities for K-8 students to receive advanced academic instruction; get extra help for student learning; and/or discover new hobbies, interests and activities outside the classroom setting. The program will offer each school district a grant that will fund 75% of the estimated program cost of \$124.9 million. While the cost of these type of programs vary, research shows that high-quality and successful programs cost approximately \$1,200 per child for an eight-week program. However, based on outreach to our professional network, there is a higher cost due to COVID-19 with the need for social distancing and additional safety protocols. As a result, it is recommended to use an estimate of \$1,800 per child. Using this as a guideline, the Department estimates a minimum of 69,180 K-8 students across the state would receive support from the Summer Enrichment/Academic Program Grants.

ODE will calculate the maximum amount of funds for each district using the same methodology as the State School Fund with an increased adjustment for school district with high rate of poverty. Each district will have an opportunity to submit an intent to participate based on the requirements of the program. For participating districts, grant awards will be made based on the numbers of students they estimate to serve. Any funds not awarded due to the district choosing either not to participate or not fully serving the estimated number of students, will remain unallocated.

Summer Academic Support Grants (High School Students) – \$71.9 million

These grants would offer up to 75% of the estimated cost for school districts to serve up to 50% of its high school student population with a six week, four days a week course that enables them to make up any high school credits during the last two school years. The total estimate for this program is \$95.9 million, of which ODE would fund \$71.9 million (75% of program cost). Every school district with a high school (185 out of 197) would receive funding that is based on actual school year instructional and student transportation cost. ODE will provide an estimated amount of grant funding for each school district based on serving 50% of the high school population. This represents 89,743 students in grade 9 through 12.

Based on 50% of each school districts high school population, ODE will calculate the amount of maximum funds available by district. Each district will have an opportunity to submit an intent to participate based on the requirements of the program. For participating districts, grant awards will be made based on the numbers of students they estimate to serve. The funds that are not awarded due to districts choosing either not to participate or not fully serving the estimated number of students, will remain unallocated.

School Activity Grants - \$40 million

In addition to funding administered through school districts and existing early learning programs, ODE will enter into a partnership with the Oregon Community Foundation by providing a \$41.2 million grant that allows both for summer activities for an estimated K-12 students, as well as additional support services for children birth to 5 and their families.

ODE will target \$40 million of the grant for OCF to award Summer Activity Grants. These grants would help support enrichment programs that focus on activities that support learning that occurs outside the classroom. These services will be offered through public and non-profit organizations that provide community-based services for a variety of indoor and outdoor activities, including but not limited to music, arts, physical education, and other various activities that encourage engagement and participation with peers. These activities will be available to all school-aged children and youth. Using the same estimate of a high-quality enrichment program used under the Summer Enrichment/Academic Program Grants, ODE estimates a minimum of 20,000 students could participate in these services.

Parent and Child Support Grants - \$1.2 million

The remaining \$1.2 million of the OCF grant will be used, in partnership with ELD, to provide Parent/Child Support Grants to support an estimated 600 families with children, ages birth to 5, to participate in 12 weeks of parent-child summer programming. The services would support social-emotional development and healthy attachment, and be delivered in-person in accordance with applicable COVID-19 practices. Providers that serve children with disabilities in inclusive environments and families that have experienced trauma or at-risk for child welfare system involvement would be prioritized, including families served by Relief Nurseries and Healthy Families Oregon program partners.

School Child Care Grants - \$30 million General Fund/\$10 million Federal Funds

These grants will provide a complement to the Summer Enrichment/Academic Program Grant for low-income families with K-5 students that wish to participate in the programs, but would need wrap around child care to do so. Qualified school districts may also receive along with their Summer Enrichment/Academic Program Grants, a School Child Care Grant to offer part-time child care services either operated by the school district or in partnership with experienced child care providers in the community. This grant funding is estimated at \$40 million total and is based on serving K-5 participants in Title I elementary schools. Based on the total estimated participation of 69,180 in the summer programming offered by school districts, it is estimated that 25,218 of these students would receive support from additional wrap around child care services.

ODE will calculate a maximum amount of funding for each school district that operates Title I elementary schools. This amount will be based on an estimated child care cost for 15% of each district's K-5 students for 8 weeks. This will enable the student to participate in the Summer Enrichment/Academic offered by the school district. Each district will have an opportunity to submit an intent to participate based on the requirements of the program. For participating districts, grant awards will be made based on the numbers of students they estimate to serve. The funds that are not awarded due to districts choosing either not to participate or not fully serving the estimated number of students, will remain unallocated.

Early Learning Programs - \$12 million General Fund/\$11.2 million Federal Funds

To help support additional learning and child care for Oregon children from birth to age five, the ELD will use its existing portfolio of programs to offer additional programming. This includes the Oregon Prekindergarten Program, Preschool Promise, and the Early Childhood Equity Fund. The ELD will increase current grants and contracts for these programs by \$8.0 million, which will result in 2,900 summer slots for children from birth to age 5 for a programming period that ranges between 8 to 12 weeks, depending on the program model. In addition, ELD will increase the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation Program (KPI) contracts with Early Learning Hubs by \$4.0 million to expand kindergarten transition programming to reach an additional 2,000 children and families and schools statewide.

The ELD also proposes utilizing Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds received through the federal stimulus act to increase its existing agreement with the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) for the Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) Program. The ELD will provide \$8.2 million (\$300,000 for ODHS administration) that will enable ODHS to expand the ERDC program to more providers to participate in ERDC, increase supports for providers serving children with special needs, and serve additional families, beginning this summer. ELD and ODHS will collaborate on setting priority communities with an eventual goal of subsidizing care for an additional 1000 eligible families. To help support new licensed and licensed exempt service providers into ERDC, the ELD will also include these providers in future phases of the Emergency Child Care grants program to cover operational costs. This is estimated at an additional \$3.0 million in federal child care stimulus funds.

In total, the ELD estimates this \$23.2 million investment will enable over 5,000 children from birth to 5 years of age to receive services through the summer months. This investment will provide substantial relief and support in meeting both the need for increased early learning opportunities for children and supports for working families.

Agency Operations - \$1.2 million

In order to stand up two new school-based grant programs, deliver enhanced programming for seven existing early learning programs, and develop a partnership and agreement with the Oregon Community Foundation to deliver summer activity grants, ODE will require 2.25 FTE that will be fulfilled through 9 positions over a six-month period. This will allow for the necessary time and support for the agency to develop guidelines and rules; formalize funding models; facilitate processes for applications and grant agreements; administer funding disbursement and grant management; ensure accountability and accuracy in the payment of funds; provide technical assistance and support to school districts and community-based partners; conduct the necessary reporting, evaluation and review of fiscal and program documentation; and successfully close out all grants and/or contracts.

The total cost of these positions along with employee-related expenses and professional service contracts is estimated to be \$1,175,772 for the period between April 2021 through September 2021. Each position would be established as limited-duration.

The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
 The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
 The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
 March 10, 2021
 Page 6

In summary, the total request equals \$271,207,224 of which \$250 million would be supported by General Fund and \$21,207,224 with Federal Funds from the Child Care and Development Block Grant. In addition, school districts will provide 25% of the estimated cost for the Summer Academic Support Grants and Summer Enrichment/Academic Program Grants. This equals an estimated \$55,200,852 which brings the total resource investment to \$326,408,076. The table below provides the overall budget plan for all dedicated resources:

Program	State	Federal	Local	Total
Summer Academic Support Grants	\$ 71,894,716		\$ 23,964,905	\$ 95,859,621
Summer Enrichment/Academic Program Grants	\$ 93,707,840		\$ 31,235,947	\$ 124,943,787
School Child Care Grants	\$ 30,021,672	\$ 10,007,224		\$ 40,028,896
Summer Activity Grants	\$ 40,000,000	\$ -		\$ 40,000,000
Oregon Prekindergarten	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -		\$ 2,000,000
Preschool Promise	\$ 3,600,000	\$ -		\$ 3,600,000
Early Childhood Equity Fund	\$ 2,400,000	\$ -		\$ 2,400,000
Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation	\$ 4,000,000	\$ -		\$ 4,000,000
Parent/Child Support Grants	\$ 1,200,000	\$ -		\$ 1,200,000
Employee Related Daycare (ERDC)	\$ -	\$ 11,200,000		\$ 11,200,000
State Administration	\$ 1,175,772	\$ -		\$ 1,175,772
Total	\$ 250,000,000	\$ 21,207,224	\$ 55,200,852	\$ 326,408,076

Action Requested

Approve an increase of \$250,000,000 in General Fund and \$21,207,224 in Federal Funds along with the establishment of 9 positions (2.25 FTE) to support public schools, early learning and child care providers, and community-based organizations in providing academic learning and enrichment opportunities for Oregon’s children and students during the 2021 summer.

Legislation Affected

Chapter 609, Section 2 (4) - \$250,000,000
 Chapter 609, Section 9 (1) - \$21,207,224

Thank you for considering approval of this request.

Sincerely,



Colt Gill
 Agency Director

Sincerely,



Miriam Calderon
 Early Learning System Director