



House Committee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

March 16, 2021

Chair Alonso Leon and Members of the House Committee on Education,

On behalf of the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network, I am writing in strong support of HB 2536, and to request your support.

In Oregon, 1 in 3 kids who experience hunger wouldn't normally qualify for free school meals because of their family income. Free school meals during the pandemic has made a huge impact across Oregon this past year. It's important that all students have equitable access to school meals. For many students schools are the only reliable meals they receive each week.

We've found that with increased meal participation schools have additional revenue, which increases their capacity to purchase healthy, locally grown foods.

All of Oregon's students deserve the opportunity to reach their full potential at school, regardless of where they attend. It is simpler, more efficient, and more equitable to expand income eligibility consistently statewide to all schools that fall within the legislated criteria. We urge lawmakers to ensure that all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) - but that do not offer universal school meals through CEP - will automatically become a school with Expanded Income Eligibility for free school meals.

Thank you for the consideration and I ask for your support of HB 2536.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Kemple". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Megan Kemple, Director, Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network