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Co-Chair Senator Lew Frederick
Co-Chair Representative Susan McLain
Member Senator Michael Dembrow
Member Senator Chuck Thomsen
Member Representative Teresa Alonso Leon
Member Representative Bobby Levy
Member Representative E. Werner Reschke
Member Representative Ricki Ruiz

Re: Support for HB5513-Oregon's Education Budget for the 2021-23 Biennium

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and Members of the Subcommittee on Education,

FACT Oregon is the designated Parent Training Information (PTI) Center, funded in part by the US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs and the Oregon Department of Education to support families to navigate Special Education services. Through peer-delivered support, trainings, and resources, we equip and empower families of youth experiencing disability to have high expectations and pursue whole, full lives in community. This begins in early learning and care with access to Early Intervention/Early Childhood special education services (EI/ECSE) and continues throughout a child's school career.

Children eligible for EI/ECSE services need welcoming, accessible, affordable, inclusive, high-quality early learning and care. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act makes it clear that EI/ECSE services are to be provided in the least restrictive, most natural environment. **To this end, we ask you to appropriate full funding for early learning and care - including EI/ECSE and Regional Programs.** This will interrupt existing systemic bias and segregation in the early years, which is the very root of disparate outcomes for students with disabilities. Segregation begets further segregation, but inclusive learning and care unlocks access to opportunity and equity. Participation in community early learning and care is directly linked to improved school readiness and later school outcomes for children with disabilities, including in social competence, literacy, language, and cognitive development.¹ In 2018-19, only 33.4% of Oregon children eligible for special education through EI/ECSE programs received an adequate level of services, as defined by ODE. **Prioritize adequate early childhood funding to ensure our youngest learners experiencing disability are set on a trajectory for school success, graduation, employment, and whole lives in community.**

On behalf of the 82,000+ students experiencing disability, FACT Oregon also asks for full and dedicated implementation funding for the Student Success Act. Students experiencing disability have experienced some of Oregon's worst disparities in academic access and outcomes, but the SSA offers a new path forward. We, along with our Oregon Partners for Education Justice coalition members, urge you to

¹ Lawrence, S., & Smith, S. (2016, April). Preschool Inclusion: Key Findings from Research and Implications for Policy. Retrieved March 29, 2021, from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED579178.pdf>

build on the promise of the Student Success Act and invest in a public education system that works for all—especially Black children, Indigenous children, children of color, low-income children, children in rural communities, children experiencing disability, and immigrant and refugee children.

With increased investment comes increased expectations. We ask that, with this and future funding, you:

- Direct ODE, ESDs, and districts to address academic disparities by implementing evidence-based practices that end segregation and promote inclusive education. All students must be able to access general education curriculum **and** receive the special education services they deserve in welcoming, accessible, inclusive classrooms from EI/ECSE through graduation.
- Attend to the academic, behavior, and social-emotional needs of students as result of the COVID 19 pandemic and school closures. All students and families have been impacted, but the extra burden of school support for children experiencing disability has fallen squarely upon families and significantly increased family stress. Investment and collaboration between ODE and districts is needed to address learning loss, behavior regression, and the social-emotional needs of our students and help students with disabilities succeed as they reenter school buildings. [HB 2962-1]
- Set goals that address disparity and monitor progress towards effective outcomes and necessary system change.
 - Establish a diploma structure that ensures ALL students are on track for a diploma. In 2020, only 68% of students experiencing disability graduated. 28% were non-completers – double the overall rate.² [SB 744]
 - Students with intellectual disability, orthopedic impairment and autism spend far more time in segregated placements than other students experiencing disability. Track data on the outcomes of students by placement and disability eligibility. Segregated settings are not best-practice and must be accountable to real outcomes.
 - Address the obvious – one must be in school to learn. Exclusionary practices such as suspension, expulsion and shortened day affect students experiencing disability and students of color disproportionately.³ [SB328/SB236/ HB2166-1]
 - Ethnic Studies Standards: we laud the potential it has to have measurable impact improving campus culture, lessen bullying, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. We ask for funding so Oregon’s teachers are fully prepared to help students meet these standards. [SB 227]

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Roberta Dunn, Executive Director
FACT Oregon

² Oregon Department of Education. (2020, November). Statewide annual report card. Retrieved March 29, 2021, from <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/reportcards/Pages/Statewide-Annual-Report-Card.aspx>

³ Ibid.