



January 24, 2023

Chair Michael Dembrow  
Vice-Chair Suzanne Weber  
Members of the Senate Education Committee

**RE: SB 531 – Investing in Community-Based, Culturally Responsive Summer Learning and After-School Programs**

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

As members of the **Oregon Partners for Education Justice (OPEJ)**, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to express our **strong support for your commitment to fund summer learning and after-school programs**, and our **concerns about Senate Bill 531 as currently written**.

OPEJ represents a cross-cultural network of community-based organizations, culturally specific service providers, and education advocates who are championing an inclusive, equitable, racially just, and community-centered public education system for Oregon. In 2021 and 2022, we strongly supported the Oregon Legislature’s historic investments in community-based summer learning and enrichment. **Now, we are asking state leaders to build on our success by including proactive and sustained investments in community-based organizations to provide high-quality, culturally responsive summer learning and after-school programming.**

Senate Bill 531 marks an important step toward ensuring Oregon funds summer learning and after-school programs on an ongoing basis as a core piece of our state’s public education strategy. However, the legislative language as currently written is vague and lacks clear intent from the Legislature. Clear direction and guidance is critical to preparing the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to successfully implement these investments and ensure funds reach youth most impacted by inequities in educational access and outcomes.

**We respectfully request that this Committee amend the policy language in SB 531 to ensure:**

- Grant funding is allocated directly to community-based programs
- A sustainable and reliable fiscal sponsor is identified to distribute funds

- Funding is provided through an open, transparent, and inclusive grantmaking process
- ODE applies flexible and reasonable timelines for spending these grant funds
- ODE removes, where possible, administrative barriers to expanding access to community-based, culturally responsive summer learning and after-school programs

**To fulfill the greatest possible potential of Oregon’s next investment in summer learning and after-school programs, we urge the Senate Education Committee to collaborate with the [Oregon Partners for Education Justice](#) to make these improvements to Senate Bill 531. Together, we can ensure Oregon’s education system is supported to provide high-quality and culturally responsive learning and enrichment opportunities for underserved youth in every corner of the state.**

Sincerely,

**Oregon Partners for Education Justice**

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Adelante Mujeres                    | Stand for Children, Oregon                    |
| Self Enhancement, Inc.              | Urban League of Portland                      |
| Latino Network                      | Capaces Leadership Institute                  |
| REAP, Inc.                          | Oregon Student Voice                          |
| FACT Oregon                         | Friends of the Children - Portland            |
| Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality | MESA Oregon                                   |
| IRCO                                | Children’s Institute                          |
| EUVALCREE                           | NAYA Action Fund                              |
| Consejo Hispano                     | Central Oregon Disability Support Network     |
| Foundations for a Better Oregon     | Oregon Coalition of Community Charter Schools |
|                                     | Oregon Business Council                       |

**CONTACT:**

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**ENCLOSED:**

[Oregon Partners for Education Justice 2023 Legislative Agenda](#)