



March 15, 2023

To: House Committee on Education
From: Oregon Education Association
RE: Support for HB 3030

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Wrights and Hudson and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Michele Ruffin and I am with the Oregon Education Association--- which represents over 41,000 educators and education service professionals across the state, from pre-k to community colleges. Our members are classroom teachers, bus drivers, custodians, teacher assistants, school counselors, community college professionals and more.

On behalf of our members, the OEA would like to express our enthusiastic support for HB 3030 with the amendment as referenced.

Oregon became a national leader in expanding access to school meals with the passage of the Hunger-Free Schools provisions in the Student Success Act. Oregon has doubled the number of schools offering breakfast and lunch at no charge to students, yet we know that due to federal changes the waiver is presenting a barrier for an increase access to what we call universal school meals.

During the pandemic we saw not just a disruption to the learning environments we have always relied on in the classroom, but with stay at home orders we saw so many of us have to make the shifts in our lives to adjust to a remote or hybrid learning environment. This also meant a disruption to what many families and students actually relied on through school meals programs. We know that hunger or skipped meals can impact a student's ability to learn, their attention span and stress levels while in the classroom, which is why it is so important that we continue to look for ways to expand access and overall to lower student meal debt.

The passage of HB 3030 will allow for a task force to study, design and make recommendations to you all at the legislature for how we can make this a viable and continued program for our students moving forward. We will also be in good company given how many states we have seen either make universal school meals a permanent reality (Colorado, California, Maine) or those states that are considering those proposals right now (about 21 states, [the list can be found here](#)).

There will be a lot the task force can learn from other state approaches and can bring the best of their analysis to the legislature with some clear recommendations.

We urge your support of HB 3030 with the -1 amendment. Thanks so much.

Sincerely,

Michele Ruffin

Government Relations Consultant

Oregon Education Association