



Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

3/20/23

Co-Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative McLain and members of the Committee

I am writing on behalf of Umpqua Valley Farm to School in support of full funding for the Farm to School Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget. This Grant program provides critical support for schools and early childhood education programs to purchase Oregon foods and offer hands-on farm and garden curriculum. It also helps food producers purchase needed equipment and infrastructure and provides technical assistance for the farm to school community. Sustaining the current level of \$10.2 million dollars will support lasting business relationships between schools and food producers and maintain consistent educational programs that connect students to agriculture and nutrition.

Umpqua Valley Farm to School consistently serves four low-income schools in Roseburg with ongoing nutrition and garden education. We organize field trips and teach classroom lessons in additional schools as we have capacity, but the scope of our work is limited by the availability of funding and staff to offer programming in more places. This grant program will allow for the continuation and growth of our organization so we can reach students and families throughout the greater Douglas County area.

We support this grant program because it allows us to provide children with early exposure to fresh food and hands-on outdoor activities, which are critical for healthy development. In addition to helping kids and communities build skills for health and wellness, Farm to School programs sustain the local food system and support our local economy. Our relationships with farmers and schools can also facilitate emergency response in times of crisis like wildfires or earthquakes.

We ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at the current level of \$10.2 million so we can continue to support healthy kids, schools and communities.

Sincerely,
Erin Maidlow
Erin Maidlow, Executive Director
Umpqua Valley Farm to School
Roseburg, Oregon