



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

March 31, 2023

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

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

As a statewide organization focused on making healthy, locally grown food accessible to under-served Oregonians we know the strong role that farm to school programs play in supporting a resilient local food system that lifts up farmers and eaters alike. Farmers Market Fund is the administrator of the Double Up Food Bucks program, which matches SNAP funds at farmers markets, CSAs, and grocery stores in order to increase the purchasing power of customers and support local farmers. We support the Farm to School Grant program because it builds skills and interest in eating local food that stay with kids as they grow up and become shoppers making food choices. We know that many of the customers that use our Double Up Food Bucks program learned about it because they already valued buying their food from local farmers and farmers markets. Farm to School instills these values at a young age and the effect ripples out to strengthen Oregon's local food system for generations to come.

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 this program can continue to support healthy kids, schools and communities. Thank you for your time.

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

Rachael Ward
Executive Director, Farmers Market Fund
Serving the entire state of Oregon