

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

March 15, 2023

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

I am writing on behalf of Thimbleberry Collaborative Farm 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.

I am the executive director of Thimbleberry Collaborative Farm, an educational community farm where students from East Multnomah County can learn about how to grow and cook with seasonal produce. As educators and producers, we support this grant program because it builds skills for wellness and health in kids and communities, as well as builds a strong local food system and supports our local economy.

I 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.

Amanda Martinez
Executive Director
Thimbleberry Collaborative Farm
Boring, OR