

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

3/22/23

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

I am writing on behalf of RedTwig Education 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 an education hub coordinator for the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network (OFSSGN) and parent in rural northeast Oregon, I support this grant program because it builds skills for wellness and health in kids and communities, builds a strong local food system and supports our local economy, and supports schools as hubs for communities especially during times of crisis such as wildfires and pandemic.

More, not less, farm to school and school garden funding is needed in remote communities of Oregon, such as mine in Union County. Our rural communities do not have the depth of resources that other urban and suburban regions have including farm to school and school garden resources. My work with the OFSSGN provides technical assistance to educators and nutrition specialists. The people doing the work are largely volunteers or are adding more work to the already high workload.

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, especially in under-resourced areas of the state. Thank you for your time.

Carrie Caselton Lowe

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