



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
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Oregon State Legislature
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Capital Construction

Dear Capital Construction Subcommittee Co-Chairs and Committee Members:

Support for Salem-Keizer Public Schools application for Lottery Capital Project Request

Salem-Keizer Public Schools Lottery Capital Project Request is necessary to provide critically needed psychiatric day treatment options for students in the Willamette Valley region. This initiative will be a major benefit to youth ages 5 to 17 who have complex psychiatric needs and often struggle to access relevant and appropriate treatment and education.

The unmet mental health needs of youth have reached a crisis level, especially in Marion and Polk counties in which the absence of a treatment facility is in stark contrast to other urban areas (see attached map). In the 10 years leading up to the pandemic, feelings of persistent sadness, hopelessness, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors increased by roughly 40% among young people, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. It is time for the Willamette Valley to offer the services our youth need: a psychiatric day treatment center located in Marion County like there is in neighboring communities of Portland, Eugene, and Corvallis.

We believe that the proposed project is a model of private-public partnership and collaboration. Two private foundations and several public sector entities have collaborated on a business plan and service model that would offer a psychiatric day treatment option as early as January 2024. Lottery capital funding will accelerate this project and bring us closer to offering this important service to our youth.

A day treatment center in Marion County will support students with the most acute psychiatric needs. This is a key concern for our community and families, particularly among those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who face barriers when accessing advice and services.

We are committed to this project and respectfully request funding based on the application for this project.

Respectfully,

Suzanne West, D.Ed.
Director, Strategic Initiatives

Licensed Treatment Centers

