



February 14, 2024

Co-Chair Fred Girod, Co-Chair Paul Holvey

Joint Ways and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Capital Construction

**RE: Restoring \$1.425 Million Funding for the Willamette Career Academy (WCA)**

As legislators representing Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties, and serving on the House Education Committee that prioritized passage of HB 3236 in the 2023 session, we write to share our support for **\$1.425 million** in funding for the Willamette Career Academy (WCA). This funding will provide operating costs, work-based learning, internships, apprenticeships, and access to high-quality educators to teach students.

In 2023, Governor Kotek line-item vetoed the WCA funding in SB 5506 due to an inadvertent technical error in the bill that incorrectly made DAS the recipient of these funds. **This session, we are asking our 2024 legislature to correct the technical error and follow through with this critically needed funding to ensure success for this CTE workforce development program.**

The WCA is operated by the Willamette Education Service District (WESD) and has become a **successful regional hub for CTE courses and essential workforce development**. While other states have implemented regional CTE center models, this project is the first of its kind in Oregon. It is a model for a regional approach to CTE that can be employed in other parts of the state. The WCA program has demonstrated the value and viability of providing more regional opportunities for hands-on learning that students crave and industry demands.

The WCA program continues to innovate and is ready to keep growing. It currently offers six different educational programs to help address the demand for highly skilled workers in **Health Services, Diesel Technology, Construction Technology, Cosmetology, IT/Computer Science and Manufacturing**. The seventh program, **Dental Assisting**, will begin this fall.

Programs like the WCA showcase the legislature's commitment to equitable CTE programming, and growing the next generation of workforce that our state desperately needs. **WCA currently serves 245 students: 54% are Hispanic, 48% are female, and 97.5% graduate.** We highly recommend touring the WCA in-person to see this dynamic learning environment and meet the students are excited to share what they are learning.

**We request your support for the reinstatement of \$1.425 million funding to grow this extraordinary program to continue to build programming that serves our workforce needs and inspires Oregon students.**

Sincerely,



Rep Courtney Neron  
Chair, House Education



Rep Tracy Cramer



Rep Anna Scharf



Rep Ed Diehl



Sen Deb Patterson



Sen Kim Thatcher