

Submitter: Sonia Jackson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

My name is Sonia Jackson. I have taught over thirty years with Head Start. Twenty of those years have been at EOU. I would encourage you to continue to fund & support this amazing program. The funding you provide not only influences the children in our community, but their parents as well.

Last year I received a letter that every teacher hope she gets some time in her career. It was from a mom that I worked with for almost ten years. I had taught all four of her children. The oldest was now in middle school and her youngest was finishing up in my class. She spoke about the difference our program made in her family's life and for her third child —that involved doing preschool and Covid at the same time.

Your funding provides children healthy, nutritious meals, opportunities to learn more about the world & exposes them to new ideas and places. It provides a safe place where they can learn and grow.

Your support introduces our community to EOU Head Start —building strong connections & partnerships. This year we've been able to ride the Community Connections trolley to visit a local dentist who gave every child a positive first experience having a dental exam. We partnered with the La Grande fire department, the forest service, the EOU basketball team and the Grande Ronde Retirement Center. I am currently trying to promote art activities between my class and our local art center, Art Center East.

Head Start provides a unique experience, fostering connections between the parents, the children and the Head Start staff. We assist in building skills that will help parents improve their lives. We provide an excellent education and set a high bar for what children expect from school and their teachers. I have so many former students I see in the community that come up and say they wish they could still be in my class.

I may sound like I'm tooting my own horn, but we have amazing teachers in every community. And more importantly, we have amazing children. They are not old enough to speak for themselves today, so I hope that you can still hear their voice in some of my the comments. They are so worth our time, our concern and our resources. Thank you.