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March 19, 2025

Chair Courtney Neron
Vice-Chair April Dobson
Vice-Chair Emily McIntire
Members of the House Education Committee

RE: HB 2007 – Summer Learning

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice-Chair McIntire, and members of the House Education Committee,

I am the Policy Director at Foundations for a Better Oregon (FBO). FBO is a partnership of five Oregon philanthropic organizations committed to ensuring Oregon's systems support every child to learn, grow & thrive. **I am writing to thank you for your on-going efforts and urge your further refinement of HB 2007.**

As you know, FBO has long believed in the power of high-quality summer and after-school learning. We know it is a crucial and proven strategy that benefits kids, families, and community. We also continue to pay particular attention to what research means by high-quality. High-quality conditions lead to the high-quality outcomes that we seek—and know are possible—for every child.

While we commend the Legislature for its commitment to continue investing in summer learning, HB 2007 unfortunately falls short. **It misses the opportunity for children to engage in a wider range of enriching learning experiences that we know lead to academic success throughout the year.**

At FBO, we believe that people who are closest to the problems we seek to solve must be included in designing the solutions. And we're not alone in this thinking. In 2024, the legislature sought this kind of wisdom from summer and after-school experts from schools, tribes, and community-based organizations. At the direction of HB 4082, those experts put in hours of work and input to help the State develop an outcome driven, long-term plan for summer and after-school learning. Because of their work, we now have a road map that details a long term, sustainable vision for Oregon's children. Our commitment and attention to this vision matters for all children and especially for students who experience the least support in traditional school.

As written, HB 2007's targeted focus is well intentioned, but **risks limiting student learning and the outcomes we all seek.** We must do far more to maximize the potential of high-quality summer and after-school learning investments by:

- **Advancing Equity:** Summer and after-school programs are especially effective for historically underserved youth, who benefit most from community-based and culturally responsive programming that cultivates a sense of belonging and connection while providing social, emotional, and academic support.



- **Elevating the Importance of Partnership:** Schools and educators can't do it alone. Families, community members, tribes, and community-based organizations are critical partners in creating a strong learning ecosystem for children.
- **Creating a system of predictable and sustainable funding:** We need predictable and consistent funding for summer and after-school learning, including funding to community and tribal programs serving our most impacted communities.

As student outcomes lag and unacceptable disparities persist, it is time to build a predictable and consistent system of high-quality out-of-school time programs that nurture a wide range of academic learning opportunities that lead to lifelong success. High-quality programs take care to include social emotional skill building, a sense of belonging, exposure to new experiences, family engagement and academic support. By investing in high-quality summer and afterschool learning you can pull a strategic lever needed to improve academic outcomes for Oregon's children and youth.

We believe that we can do better for Oregon's kids and families.

Thank you for this time and I urge you to further consider the recommendations laid out in the HB 4082 workgroup's final report as you seek to **accelerate learning and enhance academic growth through the critical months of summer and beyond.**

Sincerely,

Anna Higgins

Anna Higgins
Director of Policy & Systems Strategy
Foundations for a Better Oregon

