



**Tigard Tualatin School District 23J  
Tigard High School**

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<https://www.ttsdschools.org/th>

Chair Clem and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ilene Olson and I am a Transition Specialist from Tigard Oregon. I am writing on behalf of the Youth Transitions Program (YTP) at Tigard High School. I'm writing to ask you to support HB 2579, to expand funding for Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden programs. This program is important to me because it helps kids, farmers, and Oregon's economy, all at once.

Specifically, I have seen Supa Fresh Youth Farm make a huge difference for the transition students that have been hired at the farm. These students have significant barriers to employment and little volunteer or paid work experience. They don't only learn the basics of organic farming, they learn to work independently and as part of a team. Supa Fresh has been especially successful at encouraging our students to try new experiences. There are camping trips where students experience bonding and camaraderie, opportunities for leadership positions, and their favorite activity- weekly cooking classes utilizing the freshly harvested vegetables that focus on healthy eating. There are opportunities to learn the business side of organic farming by learning how to create a business plan for what products to grow as well as how to prepare and sell the produce at local produce stands and CSA's.

The skills attained at Supa Fresh allow my students to transfer into so many other work opportunities in our community, whether they choose to continue with organic farming, grocery and food service, or move on to other training programs or employment.

Sincerely,

Ilene Olson

Transition Specialist, Tigard High School

Tigard, OR 97224