



April 5, 2019

Chair Doherty and members of the House Education Committee,

Hunger in Oregon remains unacceptably high. An estimated 173,000 children in Oregon live in households that experience or are at risk of hunger. That's about one in five kids.

Worse still, one in three of children at risk of hunger don't qualify for school meals. But ask any teacher: hungry kids can't learn.

Healthy school meals are just as important to learning as textbooks or pencils. Children who participate in school meals are shown to attend more days of school, improve test scores, be more likely to graduate, and earn more as adults. And school meals are becoming healthier as the legislature supports farm to school efforts.

That's why the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network supports

- **HB 2760-1: Universal Access to School Meals.** Makes Oregon's schools hunger-free by filling federal funding gaps so 761 schools with the highest need can offer meals to all kids at no charge. For the remaining 484 schools, Oregon would provide targeted support to students so eligibility for school meals is consistent with children's health insurance.
- **HB 2765-1: Breakfast After the Bell.** Ensures students have access to breakfast at school by ensuring that breakfast is available after the bell at schools with the highest rates of poverty.

This is an opportunity to pass historic legislation to ensure our students have the foundation of a nutritious breakfast and lunch to succeed academically. We urge you to pass these game-changing investments to our education system that will directly contribute to the success of Oregon's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Kemple". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Megan Kemple, Director
Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network