



Education Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

June 3rd, 2019

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of Committee:

I am a Beaverton School District employee with the Nutrition Services Department, and I am writing today on behalf of myself and our department.

I'm writing to ask you to support HB 2579 and the most recent Amendments, to expand funding for Oregon's farm to school and school garden programs. HB 2579 expands funding for schools to buy Oregon foods and for farm- and garden-based education.

I coordinate the Farm to School Program for Beaverton School District and have personally witnessed some of the greatest rewards in the collaboration between school districts and local farmers, and the growing and purchasing of local foods. Through our district's purchases, we have been able to contribute to local job creation and helped to strengthen Oregon's food economy.

Last year Beaverton School District spent more than 1 million dollars on foods grown and/or processed here in Oregon. The grant funds enabled us to reach out to smaller farmers and producers who might otherwise think that they were not large enough to provide for us. We help the farmers with routing to make it economical and we break up our purchasing/delivery schedules to make it more feasible for them to get to all of our 52 schools. Most other organizations are not willing to collaborate with farmers like school districts are, leaving most small farmers with limited outlets for selling their goods. This year we are working on a collaboration with an Organic Poultry farm who needed an outlet for their "not so easy to sell" drumsticks. We have a market for them, and they need to sell; another win-win opportunity!

With the very hopeful passing of this new Farm Bill it will be a win/win situation all around for Oregon's kids, school districts, and our agricultural community. School Garden Programs have proven to help foster healthy eating habits which in turn improves academic achievement. Kids do not normally get excited about Brussel Sprouts, but when given a chance to get their hands in the dirt, see the seeds explode into something that they can feel, smell and taste, this is a game changer. You will see from the pictures included at the end of this support letter, when student gardeners conduct their own sampling table with the foods that they themselves have grown and harvested, there is a sense of ownership and pride, as well as a desire to eat fresh and healthy foods.

Please do all you can to advance HB 2579.
Thank you for the consideration and for your service to our community.

District Goal: WE empower all students to achieve post-high school success.

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If you cannot feed 100 hungry people, then just serve one." ~ Mother Teresa



This farmer from Baker City rented a Uhaul trailer for her delivery of apples, as she wanted to make sure that each of our 52 schools would receive at least a case. It means a lot for small farmers to be able to provide school children with their fresh produce.



Students LOVE getting involved with food prep and it begins conversations that would not normally take place around food.



Above: Student Farmers at Terra Nova Farm and School of Science and Sustainability



Above: Students conducting a taste test of student grown Brussel Sprouts, with their peers