



March 24, 2021

Subject: Support for Fully Funding Early Learning Hubs in the 2021-2023 Budget

To Senator Frederick, Co-Chair; Representative McLain, Co-Chair; and Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education -

During the early years, a child and their family build the foundation for lifelong learning, health and wellbeing. Northwest Regional ESD's service area encompasses two Early Learning Hubs: Northwest Early Learning Hub (Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties) and Early Learning Washington County (Washington County). As the local conveners of a region's early learning infrastructure, Early Learning Hubs ensure that, regardless of the door through which a family enters Oregon's rapidly developing early learning system, they are accessing connected and accessible services.

The Early Learning Division identifies Early Learning Hubs as the essential first tier of support in the state's Theory of Action for a coordinated, effective early learning system; Hubs are unmatched in their ability to help Oregon reach lofty early learning goals that require engaged, localized cross-sector partners and a shared community vision. However, antithetically, Hubs are currently slated for a \$1.4 million reduction in funding.

Early Learning Hubs play the invaluable role of convening critical partners in identifying and closing gaps in services in these critical years. Here are some examples of how the Northwest Early Learning Hub, for which Northwest Regional ESD is the backbone organization, has responded to local needs in the past few years:

- Since 2016, the Northwest Early Learning Hub has partnered with school districts in the region to serve over 1,400 incoming kindergarteners through a summer kindergarten transition camp. In 2019, an evaluation by Portland State University found that camp participants had significantly better early numeracy skills upon entering kindergarten than non-camp participants.
- When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit, Northwest Early Learning Hub partnered with Consejo Hispano, a community-based organization, and Northwest Regional ESD's Migrant Education program to develop and deliver family activity kits for more than 130 families.
- Alongside Healthy Families Oregon, a home visiting program, we helped supply more than 100 families with basic needs such as diapers, wipes, sanitizer, masks, and safety proofing gear. We know that providing these kinds of items, especially in emergent situations where a family has an unforeseen crisis, decreases stress for parents who are working hard to make ends meet.

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3194 Marine Drive
Astoria, OR 97103

■ Columbia County
503-366-4100
800 Port Avenue
St. Helens, OR 97051

■ Tillamook County
503-842-8423
2515 3rd Street
Tillamook, OR 97141

■ Washington County
503-614-1428
5825 NE Ray Circle
Hillsboro, OR 97124



Further, we are just beginning to understand the extent of the impact of the pandemic on families with young children, many of whom have struggled to care for their children while maintaining employment.

With enhanced investment from the federal government and a healthy revenue forecast, we have a responsibility to fully fund vital local coordination systems that ensure families have a trusted & knowledgeable avenue to turn when they need help.

I urge your support for fully restored Early Learning Hub funding.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of two circles connected by a wavy line.

Dan Goldman
Superintendent | Northwest Regional ESD

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