
TO: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education
FROM: Deena Corso, Juvenile Services Division Director, Multnomah County
RE: JDEP Funding, SB 5513
DATE: March 31, 2021

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain, and members of the committee:

My name is Deena Corso, Juvenile Services Division Director at Multnomah County. I am here today to request a \$5.4 million investment in the Juvenile Detention Education Program (JDEP), which would cover the \$4.1 million ODE deficit and also make investments in programs like ours that historically have not been adequately funded and have seen increased funding strain during COVID-19.

Youth in county juvenile facilities receive schooling through JDEP, which is run in Multnomah County by an Education Service District via contract with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). The contract amounts are based on average daily membership (ADM), similar to a standard school district. Neither the number of classrooms a program operates nor the extended school year are considered. These contracts have long been insufficiently funded to serve the youth in our care.

In years past, ODE has used carry-over funds to supplement contracts in our smallest sites to ensure they can hire at least one full-time licensed teacher, but these funds have not been offered to larger facilities. This has resulted in insufficient funding to provide a teacher in each classroom for facilities like Donald E. Long (DEL) in Multnomah County. As of this year, these supplemental dollars are no longer available for any facilities.

While backfilling ODE's \$4.1 million deficit does restore short term support for smaller sites who previously received supplemental dollars, it perpetuates the ongoing lack of funding for larger facilities that have been exacerbated by COVID-19. COVID has put students at DEL at an even greater disadvantage. We have had to place students into smaller cohorts to maintain physical distance, resulting in an increase in the number of classrooms but not the number of students. With no additional funding, we have had no choice but to cut their in-person instruction in half to manage with an already insufficient number of teachers.

A \$5.4 million investment will get us through the coming biennium. It will ensure that students in detention have access to licensed teachers and necessary support staff who help students transition back into their home districts. Investments should reach all youth in detention, not only those in select smaller communities. Our students should have access to the same level of service that smaller detention centers across the state will be able to provide with a \$4.1 million investment.

We know that DEL disproportionately serves students of color. As we work to advance equity goals, we must address the barrier that an insufficient education can create. We look forward to working with Sen. Dembrow and others during the interim to address the complexity of these programs and come up with a more sustainable model for serving our students in detention, but we must secure funding for the short term so we can focus on long-term goals. An investment of \$5.4 million is needed in the current

biennium by this body to ensure that JDEP facilities can all continue providing services until we reach a more sustainable solution.

Sincerely,

Deena Corso

Juvenile Services Division Director, Multnomah County

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