

March 29, 2021

Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
Oregon State Legislature

RE: Support for Increase in Funding

Dear Senator Frederick, Representative McLain, and Members of the Committee:

HB 3427 (2019) established the foundation and operational guidance for Oregon's Student Success Act including funding and support for improved educational outcomes for students across the state. As part of this Legislation, Oregon's education service districts (ESDs) were identified as playing a critical role in the implementation of the programs proposed by the Act. An appropriation of \$24 million was budgeted for grants from the Statewide Education Initiatives Account to ESDs to support component school districts in the development and implementation of their 2020-21 plans. This appropriation was later reduced to \$20 million in August of 2020. On behalf of Douglas ESD and our 13 school districts, we are asking that this amount be restored to \$42 million for the 2021-23 biennium. This amount represents the original service level appropriation for the full two-year period of the upcoming biennium.

The support for component school districts in our region has focused on the following activities:

- We are supporting districts with the implementation of their behavior and mental health plans. School districts have hired or plan to hire behavior and mental health specialists. These roles are different than traditional educator roles. Douglas ESD provides ongoing supports to those hired into those roles by providing professional development and coaching.
- Districts are looking to advance their community engagement with the focal group populations. Douglas ESD is supporting districts with different community engagement models to reach out and build trust with the focal group populations.
- The purpose of SSA is to invest in opportunities to increase access and equity for focal group populations to education. This means that leaders and education systems need to understand the role bias and systemic oppression play in providing culturally appropriate education to students. We are helping districts to learn more and therefore make more effective investments with SSA dollars.

We urge your consideration of \$42 million for the 2021-23 biennium from the Statewide Initiatives Account for ESDs to continue and further develop this work in our region with our 13 school districts and their approximately 13,500 students.

Sincerely,

Michael Lasher, Superintendent Douglas ESD.