



March 31, 2021

Co-Chair Lew Frederick
Co-Chair Susan McLain
Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

RE: SB 5513 – Oregon’s Education Budget for the 2021-23 Biennium

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our community-based perspective on SB5513. My name is Elona J Wilson, and I am the Advocacy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color, an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations with representation from African, African American, Latinx, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Slavic communities in Oregon.

The Coalition of Communities of Color’s mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.

In 2019 we passed the Student Success Act, which was an important first step in making investments that addressed the serious inequities in our education system. Now it is time for the Legislature to continue this work towards equity in education by investing in our students and ensuring that funds are targeted. Oregon has never served our Black and brown children and families at the level it ought to, and we must invest intentionally to support their success.

We know that this pandemic has exacerbated the disparities that communities of color face, and it is the Legislature’s responsibility to ensure that the funds coming from the state are spent in an equitable and intentional manner.

The children and families that our member organizations serve have always faced disparities in our state, and as you and your constituents know all too well, these issues will not be resolved as we navigate an uncertain recovery. BIPOC, immigrant and refugee, and undocumented communities have been living in a tapestry of injustices since the founding of this county, from





racial disparities, socioeconomic injustices, and inequities in health outcomes and in health care access are just some examples.

A key component of remedying these inequities is increasingly partnering with communities who have been historically and are currently marginalized. Our member organizations serve a diverse array of students and families and with the Statewide Equity Plans, we are able to invest in community intentionally. That is why we ask you to fully support allocating \$25.2 million, which includes \$14.4 million for the Black/African American Student Success Plan, \$4.1 million for the Latinx and Indigenous Student Success plan, and \$8.4 million for the American Indian/Alaska Native Student Success Plan. We also ask you to allot \$27.7 million for the Early Childhood Equity Fund to expand access to culturally specific early learning programs provided by community-based organizations and Tribal Nations.

It is time to lead with the values you've previously committed to, and to be innovative and creative in the funding and policy solutions you bring forward. It is time to re-envision and re-imagine educational structures and programs, and the first step is investing in our children and our communities.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, I urge you to take action towards advancing equity in education by investing in these community-driven priorities for our children.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elona J. Wilson".

Elona J Wilson
Advocacy Director
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