

Co-chairs and members of the committee, my name is Johnell Bell, and I am the Board President for Airway Science for Kids, “ASK”. Founded in 1992, our mission is to create equity through aviation STEM education. Our programs serve kids and families in N/NE Portland, Hillsboro, and in Marion County.

Employment Projections for the Portland Metro area indicate significant growth in STEM related jobs over the next 10 years. However, the racial, gender, and socioeconomics of these future employees is not likely to be diverse. Many children of color are dissuaded from perusing STEM subjects early on in their education. In 2014-15, just 23.4% of African American students met math benchmarks.

Because of our 30-year history in the community, people trusted us to provide services to their families --and we had a facility to do so—during this unprecedented pandemic. We have provided over 2000 meals to our families as part of the Child Nutrition Program.

Over 65% of our students are from communities of color and 75% from families with low incomes.

We accomplish this through project-based, standards-aligned programs, both in person and virtually for ages eight through twenty-one.

We request a **\$1,000.000** investment in this mission by supporting our request to secure the historic African American Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS) in NE Portland. Our goal is to Create a STEM/CTE Center that offers an ecosystem of technology opportunities for students and entrepreneurs of color. We are fortunate to have a facility to serve hundreds of families. But we also realize that a stable focused entity like ours is not only critical in times of crisis, but a key to a stable future that we can all be proud of.

We thank Senators Johnson and Frederick and Representative Bynum for their longstanding support of our mission and respectfully ask this committee for a **\$1,000.000 investment in this vision and for our children who need it most.**

Thank you