



WILLAMETTE CAREER ACADEMY



May 7, 2021

Dear Co-Chairs and members of the committee,

My name is Johnie Ferro, and I am the Principal at the Willamette Career Academy which is a unique opportunity to provide access to students across Marion, Yamhill and Polk counties who have limited program options, come from low socio-economic and historically marginalized communities, and students who simply need a clear pathway to high-demand and high-wage jobs.

As a former CTE student and teacher I have seen firsthand the power of hands-on learning through the context of business and industry and how it not only transforms individual students' lives but entire communities. We know students who participate are more likely to graduate high school, persist in post-secondary education and training, and enter the workforce into valuable, living wage jobs.

Our mission is simple: *We connect education, industry and community through classroom and work-based experiences. Together, we empower students to uncover their best possible future.*

As of today, we have over 390 students vying for 240 seats in WCA programs next fall. As you consider your support, I want to share some of what our potential students have indicated on their applications. A diesel applicant wrote, "I would be a good fit for the program because traditional school hasn't been for me. I was considering dropping out before WCA was an option, but this is worth staying in school for."

A potential cosmetology student wrote, "As a Latina woman, I always strive to help others and make others feel beautiful. I hope to one day be able to open my own business and use my passions to be a trademark for women empowerment and represent the Latino community through my work.

And finally, a student applying for Health Services wrote, "I have a love for helping others and the workings of the human body. My hopes for the future align with this program so it would be an amazing opportunity for me.

As you can see the Willamette Career Academy is a solid investment in students and the economy. Our programs are designed to create more access by tearing down barriers that have plagued traditional education for generations. We urge your support of this important and timely project and thank you for your commitment to all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Johnie Ferro



Willamette Career Academy In partnership with Mountain West Investment Corporation

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