



January 24, 2023

Chair Michael Dembrow  
Vice-Chair Suzanne Weber  
Members of the Senate Education Committee

**RE: SB 531 – Investing in Community-Based, Culturally Responsive Summer Learning and After-School Programs**

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

As the Director of Education Programs at Adelante Mujeres and an active member of the **Oregon Partners for Education Justice (OPEJ)**, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to express my **strong support for your commitment to fund summer learning and after-school programs**, and my **concerns about Senate Bill 531 as currently written**.

As a grandmother of a child with special needs that is having a hard time learning in a system that does not fit her needs, I ask you to support SB 531 and the invest in programs that support my granddaughter and all the children that need culturally responsive services.

Adelante Mujeres is a culturally responsive, community-based organization that provides high quality services to children, youth, and families in our community with a strong focus on the Latinx population. As providers of preschool education and after school programming for children and youth, we have witnessed the disparities that our low income, English language learners, students of color experience in our Early Childhood and K-12 education systems. Every child in our state deserves to be provided with year around high-quality childcare and educational opportunities that will support their cognitive and social emotional goals. Through the pandemic, we were able to secure funding for one time to provide summer services to our preschool and youth participants and this had a great positive impact in our students and families especially the ones with special needs. **Now, we are asking state leaders to build on our success by including proactive and sustained investments in community-based organizations to provide high-quality, culturally responsive summer learning and after-school programming.**

Senate Bill 531 marks an important step toward ensuring Oregon funds summer learning and after-school programs on an ongoing basis as a core piece of our state's public education strategy. However, the legislative language as currently written is vague and lacks clear intent from the Legislature. Clear direction and guidance is critical to preparing the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to successfully implement these investments and ensure funds reach youth most impacted by inequities in educational access and outcomes.

**We respectfully request that this Committee amend the policy language in SB 531 to ensure:**

- Grant funding is allocated directly to community-based programs
- A sustainable and reliable fiscal sponsor is identified to distribute funds
- Funding is provided through an open, transparent, and inclusive grantmaking process
- ODE applies flexible and reasonable timelines for spending these grant funds
- ODE removes, where possible, administrative barriers to expanding access to community-based, culturally responsive summer learning and after-school programs



To fulfill the greatest possible potential of Oregon's next investment in summer learning and after-school programs, we urge the Senate Education Committee to collaborate with the [Oregon Partners for Education Justice](#) to make these improvements to Senate Bill 531. Together, we can ensure Oregon's education system is supported to provide high-quality and culturally responsive learning and enrichment opportunities for underserved youth in every corner of the state.

Sincerely,

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**ENCLOSED:**

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