



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Government Relations

January 26, 2023

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

As Superintendent of Oregon's largest district, Portland Public Schools (PPS), I write to advocate for **early and ongoing funding** for high-quality, culturally-responsive **afterschool and summer programs**. Districts like PPS require sufficient time to recruit teachers, begin the enrollment process, and develop programming that meets our community's needs.

I ask for your support of SB 531.

Our students urgently need additional extended learning opportunities. Thanks to prior Legislative funding, PPS offered a constellation of programs and experiences last summer that both addressed academic needs and provided meaningful enrichment opportunities to 5,761 students. Instead of losing skills over the summer – the typical summer slip – our students grew and benefited from a robust menu of academic programming and enrichment opportunities:

- over 80% of the students maintained or increased their reading level
- over 85% maintained or increased their math proficiency – and nearly 80% of those students were previously in the lowest quartile of achievement
- first grade literacy improved nearly 76% across all metrics
- students identifying in persistently underserved racial and ethnic groups saw comparable success to White students
- students who receive special education services and English language learners experienced significantly accelerated growth in early literacy skills

For older students, summer programming can unlock new opportunities. PPS partnered with Portland Community College (PCC) to support high school students with an interest in education and who identify as members of underserved racial and ethnic groups. These students served as classroom interns for our summer academic programs while simultaneously being enrolled in a PCC Introduction to Education course. This was a multifaceted triumph:

- we improved the experience of our elementary students
- we bolstered high school pathways to educational careers

- we created opportunities for high school summer work
- we laid the foundation to increase the number of Black, Native, Latino, and Multiracial educators across Oregon

Finally, summer programming has helped us address two persistent community-wide issues in the Portland area: racial equity and community safety. PPS partnered with an array of community-based organizations to provide high-interest, prosocial, and culturally-affirming activities for students throughout the summer. This work was often in line with investments and programming by the City of Portland's Office of Violence Prevention and Multnomah County. Students engaged in experiential learning aligned to their interests, such as culinary arts, theater programs, sports, STEAM activities, philanthropy, and visual arts. These opportunities keep students learning, prepare them for careers or further learning, and clearly convey the message that the adults in their lives care about them and want them to succeed. This affirmation, and the adjacent sense of caring and support, is both a strong deterrent to violence and an investment in community.

SB 531 is an important and proactive step districts can implement to support progress towards student outcome goals. It would help accelerate student learning through targeted support to our state's persistently underserved youth and families. It would support districts' ability to address the pandemic disruptions and the amplified disparities that have impacted our students. And, in districts like Portland Public Schools, it would also help support our efforts to build a more diverse educational workforce, in partnership with our local community colleges.

On behalf of Portland Public Schools, I offer our gratitude for the Legislature's past commitment to summer programming and urge your support on SB 531.

Sincerely,

Guadalupe Guerrero
Superintendent, Portland Public Schools