

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Oregon State Capitol

900 Court Street NE

Salem, Oregon 97301

3-22-2023

Co-Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative McLain and members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of *(your farm/business/organization's name)* in support of the Farm to School Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget. This Grant program provides critical funding for schools and early childhood education programs to purchase Oregon foods, hands-on farm and garden education programs, equipment and infrastructure for food producers and technical assistance for the farm to school community.

Sustaining the current level of \$10.2 million dollars will support dependable business relationships between schools and food producers and maintain consistent educational programs that connect students to agriculture and nutrition.

School Garden Project of Lane County currently partners with 18 elementary and middle schools located throughout 4 school districts in Lane County to teach our Science in the Garden program.



*Committed to a future in which children become healthy adults who eat fruits and vegetables, know the basics of growing food, steward the natural world, and contribute to a thriving community.*



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As an organization that's main mission is to educate children about science, to be good stewards of the natural world, how to grow your own food, and about the nutritional benefits of eating fresh fruits and vegetables, we support this grant program. The grant is instrumental in funding programs that encourage healthy eating habits, support local farmers, and creates community hubs that support collaboration and cooperation in the efforts to provide food security to our friends and neighbors.

I ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at the current level of \$10.2 million so this program can continue to support healthy kids, schools and communities.

Thank you for your time.

*Mindy Bell*

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*Executive Director*

*School Garden Project of Lane County*

*Eugene, OR*