



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**February 3, 2025**

Senate Committee on Education

**Subject: Support for Afterschool Learning and Enrichment Grant Program (SB 896)**

Dear Chair Senator Frederick, Vice-Chair Senator Weber, and Committee Members,

I am the Chief Executive Officer at the Mid-Willamette Family YMCA in Albany, Oregon. I strongly support SB 896 to fund afterschool grants, ensuring all children have access to high-quality programs. Afterschool programs enrich lives, support families, and strengthen communities.

This legislation ensures direct funding access for community-based organizations (CBOs), recognizing their expertise. Annually, our YMCA serves 201 in our afterschool programs and 280 in our summer programs.

Summer and afterschool programs play a crucial role in supporting children's and adolescents' mental health by providing safe, structured, and enriching environments. These programs offer numerous benefits, including:

1. **Emotional Well-being & Stress Reduction** – Engaging activities, supportive mentors, and positive peer interactions help reduce anxiety, depression, and stress, offering children a sense of stability and belonging.
2. **Social Connection & Relationship Building** – Programs foster friendships and teamwork, helping children develop communication skills, empathy, and self-confidence while combating loneliness and isolation.
3. **Physical Activity & Healthy Routines** – Many programs incorporate sports, outdoor play, and mindfulness activities, which are proven to boost mood, reduce stress, and promote overall well-being.
4. **Academic & Personal Growth** – Low-pressure learning environments support academic confidence while creative and skill-building activities enhance self-esteem and resilience.
5. **Safe Spaces & Trusted Mentors** – These programs provide a safe, supervised setting where children can express themselves, seek guidance, and receive emotional support from caring adults.



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Investing in summer and afterschool programs is an investment in the mental health and well-being of our youth, helping them thrive both in and out of the classroom. We urge your support for SB 896 and stand ready to assist.

**Sincerely,**  
Chris Reese  
CEO