



## Senate Committee on Education

### Testimony in Support of Afterschool Learning and Enrichment Grant Program

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee,

Oregon's most recent NAEP scores confirm what educators, families, and community organizations see every day: too many of our kids are falling behind, especially in math and reading. This is not just a pandemic recovery issue. It is a long-standing challenge made worse by out-of-school-time learning loss and disproportionate achievement gaps among students from low-income families and under-resourced communities.

Research shows that students without access to out-of-school-time learning opportunities, especially during summer, lose up to two months of academic progress each year, with low-income youth experiencing the steepest declines. Studies also show that students engaged in comprehensive afterschool programming make academic gains and demonstrate increased success in key school metrics such as behavior and attendance. Unfortunately, [research in Oregon indicates](#) that the students who stand to benefit the most from expanded learning programs also face the greatest barriers to accessing them. Oregon's NAEP results reflect this reality, showing persistent disparities in student achievement across socioeconomic lines.

At Boys & Girls Clubs of Bend, we see firsthand the impact of high-quality summer programming. More than 65% of the youth we serve rely on a sliding scale of scholarships, ensuring that cost is never a barrier to learning and growth. National and state data consistently show that students from lower-income families are more likely to experience learning loss during the summer due to limited access to academic enrichment and structured programs. Over time, these gaps compound, leading to disparities in high school graduation rates, postsecondary opportunities, and long-term economic mobility. By investing in high-quality summer and afterschool programs, we can help break this cycle and provide all students with the opportunities they need to succeed.

Our programs, rooted in Academic Success, Healthy Lifestyles, and Good Character & Leadership, provide the structured learning and mentorship that help kids stay on track year-round. Community-based organizations play a critical role in supporting student success. While we adhere to strict national guidelines and standards to ensure high-quality, high-impact programming, organizations like ours often face challenges such as insurance requirements and administrative hurdles when aligning with local and state education policies. As Oregon invests in summer and afterschool learning, it is important that funding mechanisms are designed to be fair and accessible without imposing duplicative compliance measures that create unintended barriers for organizations already embedded in and serving their communities. Strong, ongoing partnerships between schools and community organizations will help ensure that more students have access to the resources they need to thrive.

We support SB 896 to fund afterschool grants, helping ensure that every child, regardless of their socioeconomic background, has access to high-quality afterschool programs. Investing in community-led afterschool and summer programs will support our youth, our workforce, and the future of our state.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Oregon's youth. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and share how community-based programs like ours are making a real impact.

Best,

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