

Submitter: Wisteria Stuart
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3435
TO: House Committee on Education

FROM: Wisteria Stuart, Executive Director, Grow Portland, Portland, Oregon
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3435

Chair Neron, Vice-Chair McIntire, Vice-Chair Dobson, and Members of the
Committee,

My name is Wisteria Stuart, Executive Director of Grow Portland. We currently work in 16 Elementary Schools across Portland Public and David Douglas School Districts. Each month (September - June) we provide direct outdoor instruction focused on food, health, gardening and environmental education to 6500+ students. Grow Portland is in strong support of House Bill 3435, School Meals for all, which would ensure that every Oregon kid has the food they need at school, regardless of where they live in the state or how much money their parents make.

Our organization specifically supports School Meals for All because the data tells us that students who are hungry and/or food insecure are not able to focus on their studies and fall behind in many metrics of learning and comprehension. On the other hand, students who are fed and know that no matter what is going on at home they can look forward to and count on two square and nutritionally balanced meals (breakfast & lunch) at school do better at school in all regards including attendance.

School Meals for All will create a level playing field for all students to thrive regardless of family income and other barriers to food security, which directly impacts our organization's ability to provide hands-on experiential outdoor learning through an equitable and inclusive model at our partner schools.

Thank you!