

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3435

School Nutrition Director here, so I have a unique and informed perspective of a mid-sized district in Central OR. Solicitation of advocacy or testimony in our district hasn't been as productive as it could be because we've slowly transitioned from 1 CEP elementary school in SY19-20, to 5, then 8 with 2 Provision 2 schools, to this year where we're able to operate CEP district-wide.

1. Less administrative burden has allowed us to build and train a Nutrition team that's able to focus on other priorities besides paperwork (compliance, new recipe development, less processed foods, work on our Local Wellness Plan, Nutrition and garden education, etc.).

2. Perhaps because our elementary have been operating under CEP for longer, the biggest impact we see this year is at the secondary levels. Our 3 high schools, including a charter school, are all open-campus and we see two major positive impacts for students.

- an increase in average daily attendance amongst teens, which research shows leads to higher graduation rates

- greater participation in our lunch programs (up around 20%), which is a big deal for student safety since fewer students are leaving campus for their lunch break.

3. And this one may be the most important for our community as a whole. Although there have been some challenges with Nutrition Departments no longer collecting and processing socioeconomic data because it affects other programs (FAN, Title 1A, Athletics, etc) no-cost meals for all students levels the social stigma around who qualifies for "free" or "reduced" price school meals under the NSLP.

Please work to find a way that no-cost meals at school may continue for Oregon's k-12 students!