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Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

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Co-Chairs Senator Sollman and Representative Ruiz and members of the Committee

I am testifying today in support of funding for the Farm to School Grant Program included in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at \$12 million dollars. This represents a 9% increase from the current service level. This Grant program is one of the few that provides wins across the board for our state by allocating funding for schools and early childhood education programs to support Oregon businesses and farms by purchasing Oregon foods, provide hands-on farm and garden education programs and technical assistance for the farm to school community. This past biennium, there were over \$15 million dollars of requests for this funding. With increases in costs of food, supplies and staffing over the past few years, this modest increase is needed simply to maintain the current level of programming.

Redmond School District has benefited from this grant program because it promotes the building of skills for wellness and health in our kids and communities. It helps promote some alternative teaching strategies in support of more students and gives students some experiences and knowledge that they may not necessarily get in the classrooms. It also builds a strong local food system and supports our local economy, which is somewhat isolated from the I5 corridor.

Our public schools not only shape Oregon's future, but also serve as hubs for communities in times of crisis (ie. wildfires, pandemics, catastrophes, etc). Recently, over \$6M in Federal funding for Local Food for Schools has been eliminated by the USDA. Now more than ever States will need to show support for programs like these (and School Meals For All, HB 3435). One way to do so is by increasing state funding for farm to school.

We ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at \$12 million.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

***Lance McMurphy***  
***Director, Nutrition Services***  
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