

Submitter: Corey Wallis  
On Behalf Of: 12M for Farm to School  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5515

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

3-13-2025

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 provides funding for schools and early childhood education programs to purchase Oregon foods, 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.

I support farm to school because kids need to understand where food comes from and how to grow it. Kids thrive when they see their hard work produce literal fruit. School gardens are an opportunity for hands-on learning in both science and math. They can also learn to appreciate farmers and why their work matters.

I support this grant program because it builds skills for wellness and health in kids and communities. Over \$6M in Federal funding for Local Food for Schools has been eliminated by the USDA, now more than ever we need to increase state funding for farm to school.

It supports schools as hubs for communities especially during times of crisis such as wildfires and pandemic.

I ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at \$12 million. Thank you for your time.

Corey Wallis  
Walla Walla Valley Farm to School Garden Education Manager

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