

Submitter: Abigail Blinn
On Behalf Of:
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

March 18, 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, as a dietitian working in schools, because this program is some of the only exposure students have to education around how food is grown and explore to fresh, local foods that are grown in Oregon. Many of the students I have worked with have benefited from this grant program by building healthier relationships to food.

I support this grant program because it builds skills for wellness and health in kids and communities, it builds a strong local food system and supports our local economy, and 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.

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.

Abigail Blinn

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